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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

SHEEP PRODUCTION IN ALBERTA

BY

DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

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Sheep Production in Alberta

BY

J. E. BOWSTEAD and J. P. SACKVILLE

The sheep industry has always held a relatively important place in the development of agriculture in Canada. In a report submitted by Governor Carleton to the Home Government nearly two hundred years ago, at the time of the French dominion in Canada, mention was made of the importance of the wool industry in the young colony. During the period of early British rule in 1765, it is reported that there were 28,000 sheep in Canada. At the time of Confederation the total number of sheep in the Dominion was estimated at 2,500,000, almost one and one-quarter millions less than the figure for 1930.

Alberta stands third among the provinces of Canada in the total number of sheep, Ontario ranking first, followed by Quebec. The figures for 1930 in Alberta being 530,000 head with a value of approximately $3,268,000. The sheep population in Alberta has increased much faster than cattle during the past ten years, being thirty-eight per cent., while there has been a decrease of five per cent. in the number of cattle. In the case of hogs, however, the number has more than doubled.

While it is a fact that the increase during the past decade in the number of sheep in this Province has been greater than was the case with cattle, at the same time in actual numbers they do not compare so favorably. According to the latest statistics available there are two and one-half times as many cattle and one and one-quarter times as many hogs as there are sheep on the farms in Alberta. There may be a fairly logical reason for this. As a rule sheep, so far as the average farmer is concerned, usually follow the pioneering stage and are looked upon as belonging to a more intensive and modified system of farming. In the establishing of the farm the horse perhaps comes first, as a source of motive power, the cow follows as a means of contributing direct sustenance and immediate income. Next in order, is usually the pig, as a means of utilizing the by-products from the cow, and sheep in most

cases will come later. It is only logical to assume that with the agricultural development that may be expected in such a young province as Alberta, eventually there will be a corresponding growth in the sheep industry.

Until recently the sheep industry in Alberta, in common with all the provinces in the Dominion, was on quite a satisfactory basis. Lamb prices were maintained at a fairly high level, and there was an increasing demand for breeding female stock at satisfactory prices. In spite of the fact that there was a considerable reduction in lamb and wool prices in 1930, there is still a fair demand for breeding stock. A considerable number of farmers are establishing flocks each year and are at the same time seeking information in regard to the feeding and general management of such flocks. This publication is issued at this time with a view to meeting this demand. In the preparation of this bulletin the object has been to keep in mind particularly the needs of the man who has had little or no previous experience with sheep, and it treats the various phases of sheep husbandry from the viewpoint of the domestic or farm flock rather than that of range sheep.

Present Status of the Sheep Industry.

In weighing the question of increased production in any farm product it is necessary to consider the matter of available markets for that particular commodity. In some cases there is the danger that any marked expansion may result in a surplus so large as to unfavorably affect market values. A review of present production, a consideration of domestic and foreign markets, the possibility of the development of future outlets and an analysis of imports and exports are all worthy of study in relation to such a problem. With this in mind an attempt has been made to present in a brief way a few facts and figures that may be of interest. Much of the information contained in the following review was obtained from the Canadian Year Book.

According to the most recent figures, sheep in Canada in 1930 numbered slightly over three and one-half million head, valued at $25,275,000. Of this number twenty-six per cent. are found in the three Prairie Provinces and slightly under fifteen per cent. in the Province of Alberta. During the periods from 1920 to 1930, there has been no increase of

sheep in Canada. During the same time, however, the cattle population has decreased nearly seven per cent., while the hog population has increased by nearly fifteen per cent.

The following table shows the number of sheep in Canada by provinces both for 1920 and 1930:

	1920	1930
Prince Edward Island	128,529	87,000
Nova Scotia	403,567	289,600
New Brunswick	280,090	153,300
Quebec	1,031,982	870,200
Ontario	1,129,084	1,134,400
Manitoba	156,716	223,400
Saskatchewan	160,918	209,900
Alberta	383,424	530,000
British Columbia	46,473	197,600
Total in Canada	3,720,783	3,696,000
Total value	$23,308,000	$25,275,000

It will be noted from the above figures covering the ten-year period that while the total number of sheep in Canada showed very little change, there was a slight falling off in the number of sheep in the Eastern Provinces, while on the other hand, there was a substantial increase in the Western Provinces. In actual number of sheep, Alberta, amongst the Prairie Provinces, shows the greatest gain during the past ten years. British Columbia, however, increased their number of sheep over three-fold.

That there is still room for expansion in the flocks of Canada is indicated from the following figures that show that Canada does not produce sufficient wool and mutton to satisfy her own requirements.

		1930
Lamb and mutton imported	4,979,227 lbs.	$ 661,687
Lamb and mutton exported	533,700 "	121,104
Difference between imports and exports	**4,445,527 "**	**$ 540,583**
Raw wool imported	10,334,225 "	$ 4,306,945
Raw wool exported	6,272,016 "	1,576,342
Difference between imports and exports	**4,062,209 "**	**$ 2,730,603**
Manufactured woollen goods imported		$42,337,081
Manufactured woollen goods exported		449,313
Difference between imports and exports		**$41,887,768**

In addition to the above facts, it is interesting to note that the per capita consumption of lamb and mutton has been gradually increasing as follows:

1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930
5.01	5.98	6.10	6.45	7.03	7.11 lbs

This, together with the fact that the population of Canada is also increasing, are indications that further expansion in the sheep business is possible before the production of lamb and mutton will satisfy consumption demands.

Although wool prices are somewhat lower than they were a few years ago, about 20% more raw wool is imported than is produced. In addition to the large importation of raw wool, over $38,000,000 worth of manufactured woollen goods, in various forms, is imported over the amount exported.

The above facts are important in that they indicate that so far as both mutton and wool are concerned Canada is not yet on a self-sustaining basis. They have a direct bearing on the whole question of expansion of the sheep industry in Alberta, and may very well be kept in mind in connection with the succeeding section of this publication.

The Place of Sheep on the Alberta Farm

There is room for more sheep in the Province of Alberta. Conditions generally would justify a gradual expansion in this direction. Many sections of Alberta can lay claim to extensive areas of land, suitable for sheep production, that are as yet not fully stocked. This applies particularly to the south-eastern portion of the province where considerable open range is still available.

Probably the greatest opportunity for expansion in the sheep business in Alberta, however, is in connection with the establishment of small farm flocks, not only in the recognized mixed farming districts, but also in those sections where wheat growing is the major farm enterprise. In addition to the fact that natural conditions of soil and climate are favorable to sheep raising in most districts of Alberta, there are additional reasons why sheep should have a place on more of the smaller farms in the province. While it is true that the scavenging qualities of sheep may be over-emphasized, at the same time it must be recognized that as a means of utilizing the vegetation on waste places, summerfallow, and stubble

Fig. 1.—Land unsuitable for cultivation can be profitably utilized by sheep.

Courtesy of Alberta Department of Agriculture.

fields, the sheep have an advantage over other classes of farm animals. The trend within the past few years towards more of a grain growing programme in sections of Central and Northern Alberta presents problems which have developed seriously in some of the older settled sections of Western Canada. It has meant the inauguration of a "one source of revenue" type of farming, a condition favorable to the establishment and spread of the weed menace. The farm flock will graze the summerfallow before and after plowing, glean the stubble fields after harvesting, as well as make possible a modified system of crop production; they will assist materially in controlling some of the more pernicious weeds and at the same time yield a substantial annual revenue. That the flock will return a tidy revenue and help to keep the farm clean is not a mere conjecture. One needs only to consider the enthusiasm of farmers who own flocks of varying sizes to appreciate that they constitute a vital part of the general farm scheme.

The farm flock produces an income from two sources, one from the sale of wool and another from the sale of lambs and culled ewes. During years of average feed and wool prices, the returns from the sale of wool are usually sufficient to cover the cost of feeding during the winter. Quick returns are secured in the case of marketable lambs, since these may be marketed within ten months after the ewes have been bred.

A large capital investment is not required in order to become established in the sheep business. More mature animals can be purchased with a given amount of money than is the case with other classes of live stock, and, next to swine, the increase in numbers is greater. This means that with a comparatively small initial outlay it is possible in a few years to grow into a reasonable sized farm flock.

The introduction of sheep as part of the farm enterprise will necessarily mean the providing of proper facilities and equipment for handling this particular class of live stock. The one feature presenting any serious financial problem is that of fencing. The flock not properly fenced is likely to prove a nuisance within the farm and may easily be more or less of a worry to one's neighbors. Fencing with woven wire is the most satisfactory in well settled mixed farming areas. While the initial investment in a suitable sheep fence may at first sight appear to be rather a serious question, at the same time when the cost of fencing is spread over the natural lifetime of a good fence, the situation is not so grave. In other words, the annual charge against the flock is not sufficient to seriously affect the financial showing. While it may be necessary to construct permanent fences in order to pasture certain fields, a considerable reduction in fencing charges may be affected by the use of movable or temporary fences whenever possible. The use of temporary fences has the additional advantage of making it possible to utilize areas not otherwise available for sheep.

Losses from coyotes and dogs present in many cases more or less of a problem in connection with keeping sheep. Good fences help to diminish losses in this connection, but the fact remains that, regardless of this, coyotes and dogs are taking too large a toll from sheep flocks in Alberta each year. It may be necessary in order to prevent these losses to provide corrals well fenced with woven wire into which the sheep may be penned during the night. Laws have been enacted to enable sheep owners to collect damages from the owners of

dogs that maim and kill sheep, but to catch or shoot the dog or to prove the guilt is not always a simple matter.

The shelter required for sheep need not be expensive. Dry, well ventilated quarters that will protect the flock from winter storms are the main features to be kept in mind in providing shelters. Observations made in connection with the sheep flock on the University Farm over a period of several years have shown that provided sheep are kept on high dry ground they will make little or no use of shelter, except during a stormy period, even though the temperature may drop considerably below zero. It is true, of course, that when the policy is followed of having ewes drop lambs during the winter some provision in the way of warmer quarters may be necessary.

Fig. 2—Sheep shelters need not be expensive.

While it is a fact that during most seasons of the year comparatively little attention need be given the flock, they do require some detailed supervision at certain times. This is particularly true during the lambing season, and to a more or less extent at weaning and breeding time. During the lambing season complications and difficulties of various kinds may develop which must receive prompt and proper attention. Unless the personal element enters into the operations at such times, reverses and discouragement may follow. All farmers do not possess the inherent qualifications necessary to make the greatest success of sheep raising. Kindness, cleanliness, regularity and the ability to sense the needs of the flock are essentials. Greatest success and maximum profits are secured only when nothing that promotes the thrift and comfort of the flock is left undone. The individual who has a

natural fondness for other classes of live stock may feel assured that he will readily acquire the ability to care for and handle sheep.

In the case of the farmer who has had little or no experience with sheep and who has only a limited capital, the suggestion would be to start with a small flock and develop the business as finances, experience and general conditions will warrant. It is true that the last few years have been good times for the sheepmen. Present conditions may not continue indefinitely, although the present relation between supply and demand in sheep products in Canada would indicate that profitable level of prices is likely to be maintained for some time. There is a justification for an increase in the number of sheep on Alberta farms, but this should come in the form of a substantial growth rather than as a speculative venture.

BREEDS OF SHEEP

A knowledge of the characteristics and adaptability of the various breeds of sheep is valuable not only in the selection of a breed for the raising of purebred animals, but also for the selection of a purebred ram to head commercial flocks. The characteristics of the different breeds vary considerably, each having points in their favor as well as features which may be regarded as disadvantages. Success in sheep raising is dependent largely upon how well the sheep owner selects a ram with characteristics that will blend well with those of his flock to produce a lamb crop of superior qualities.

Shropshires.

The Shropshire is classified among the Down breeds. Sheep of this breed are medium in size, mature rams weighting 175 to 200 pounds and ewes 140 to 180 pounds. They are low-set, with compact, smoothly turned

Fig. 3—Champion Shropshire ewe at Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, Toronto, 1927.

symmetrical bodies. When finished, they produce a carcass heavily covered with flesh throughout, especially in the region of the higher priced cuts, and are much favored by packers. The wool measures from 2½ to 3 inches in length, and usually grades medium staple. It extends well over the head, legs and belly. The color of hair on ears, nose and legs is a light brown. They are a fairly early maturing breed, their lambs respond to heavy feeding while young, and may be brought to market finish well within accepted weights.

The heavily wooled head, especially around the eyes, has been regarded by some as a detriment. This is particularly true when they are exposed to severe winter storms or when attacked by dogs and coyotes.

Oxford Down

Oxford sheep are large, the mature ram weighing from 275 to 300 pounds and mature ewes about 200 pounds. They are rather upstanding, heavily boned, and with a large rec-

Fig. 4—Champion Oxford ram at Chicago International Live Stock Exposition, 1927.

tangular shaped body. Oxfords produce a heavier fleece than any of the other Down breeds; the length is usually between 3 and 4 inches, and fleeces from mature ewes weigh between 10 and 12 pounds. It is somewhat coarser than the wool of the other Down breeds, grading low medium staple to low staple. The color of hair varies from a light to dark brown.

Oxford ewes are good milkers. They produce a large percentage of twins, and are good mothers.

Purebred Oxford lambs grow rapidly and reach market weight in 4½ to 5½ months when maintained on fair pasture without grain. This particular breed is inclined to be somewhat slower taking on the finish demanded in handy weight lambs than is the case in some of the other Down breeds. On account of this fact there may be some difficulty in the case of market lambs in securing the desired finish before becoming overweight. In previous years, when larger carcasses were in greater demand, this difficulty was not experienced to the same extent.

Hampshire Down.

The Hampshire breed of sheep during the past few years has increased in popularity. Individuals of this breed are almost as large as the Oxford; mature rams weighing 250 to 275 pounds; ewes 175 to 200 pounds.

Hampshires are medium low set, have broad backs, and a fairly blocky compact body. They show good strength of bone and have a larger head and heavier ear in proportion to their body than most breeds. Hampshire sheep produce fleeces averaging between 7 and 9 pounds. The wool is from 2½ to 3 inches long and usually grades low medium staple to medium staple. The wool covering differs in the different strains, some strains having an extension of wool over the face to almost the same extent as that of the Shropshire, while the majority of Hampshire sheep have no wool in front of the eyes except on the cheeks and forehead. The hair on the face, ears and legs should be black.

Individuals of this breed are recognized as being fairly early maturing with a tendency to fatten at a reasonably early age. Lambs respond to heavy feeding of grain, or good pasture alone, and can usually be finished for market by the time they have reached 90 pounds in weight. It is believed

Fig. 5—Hampshire ram bred and owned by the University of Alberta. A show ram and sire of many prize winners.

by some that unless given good care Hampshire sheep are more inclined to "run down" than some of the other breeds.

Suffolk Down

Suffolk sheep are also a fairly large breed of sheep, being slightly smaller than the Hampshire. Mature rams of this breed average between 230 and 260 pounds, and ewes between 150 and 175 pounds. In the past Suffolk sheep were rather upstanding, but in more recent times the length of leg has been reduced so that now animals fairly low set can readily be procured. Suffolks are not as heavily boned as the Hampshires. Their body is slightly less compact and blocky, though it still is capable of carrying considerable flesh. The meat of Suffolks is regarded as fine grained and of good quality. In a number of carcass competitions in

Fig. 6—Suffolk ewe lamb, bred by University of Alberta.

England the Suffolk breed has made a particularly good showing.

Suffolks are early maturing and reach market weight and finish almost as soon as the Hampshires. The ewes are prolific, exceptionally good milkers, and make good mothers.

Their wool covering is not extensive. The head and also legs from the knees and hocks down are free from wool. A criticism has been that too many individuals of this breed have not sufficient wool on the belly. The wool is short, though fairly compact, which makes the fleece light, averaging between six and eight pounds. The wool is of fair quality, grading low medium staple with a few individuals medium staple.

They are reasonably hardy, active and good travellers. Some breeders believe the Suffolk to be too active, making the handling of them more difficult than with most of the other breeds.

Suffolks have been successfully used on the ranges, as well as on some of the more slowly maturing breeds in other districts, for the production of heavier and more rapidly maturing lambs. Suffolks have been increasing in popularity for the production of lambs that can be marketed early in the fall before the bulk of lambs reach the market.

Southdowns.

Very few Southdowns are raised in Alberta. They are the smallest of the Down breeds, mature rams weighing 175 to 225 pounds, and the ewes 125 to 160 pounds. They are low-set, fine boned with a short neck and short, broad, compact body, well turned and heavily fleshed throughout, especially in regions of higher priced cuts. From a carcass standpoint the Southdown is an ideal mutton breed, possessing the ideal proportions and meat of finest texture. Wool extends well down the legs and over the cheeks and forehead. It yields a fairly short, fine wool, grading fine medium to medium staple. Fleece average between 5 and 8 pounds.

Fig. 7—Southdown yearling ram. Bred and exhibited by Robert McEwen and Sons, London, Ont.

Southdown lambs are noted for their fattenting qualities, becoming well finished at an early age and at a weight of between 60 and 70 pounds. Due to this fact they may be held over for a more favorable market without injuring the quality of carcass or becoming overweight. This characteristic as well as their superior mutton qualities, has led to the

use of Southdown rams for crossing with ewes of other breeds, where the aim is to produce early maturing lambs or for the production of hot house lambs.

Ewes of this breed are not regarded as being prolific or as good milkers as some of the larger breeds, though they make good mothers.

Dorset Horn.

Comparatively few Dorset Horn sheep are found in Alberta. They are of fair size, similar to the Hampshire or Suffolk in this regard, but do not show quite the mutton quality or conformation of these breeds. Both sexes are horned and the hair on face and legs is white or light grey. The Dorset Horn does not shear a heavy fleece, but the wool is of fair quality. The Dorset Horn is one of the most prolific breeds of sheep for the reason that it is possible to produce two crops of lambs each year.

In districts near large markets sheepmen make use of the Dorset Horn ewes for the production of hothouse lambs by mating them with Southdowns, Shropshire and, to a lesser

Fig. 8—Champion Dorset ewe at Chicago International Live Stock Exposition, 1927.

extent, rams of the other Down breeds. The crossbreds possess many of the mutton characteristics and properties of the ram and are desirable lambs for the butcher trade.

Cheviot.

The Cheviot is one of the most stylish and attractive breeds of sheep. Their alert appearance, white color, black nose and hoofs, body carriage, and general outline make this breed one that is admired. Mature rams weigh 175 to 200 pounds and ewes 125 to 160 pounds. The ewe produces a fleece of medium weight, averaging 5 to 8 pounds, of fair quality, usually grading fine medium staple.

Cheviots are noted for their length of life, prolificacy, hardiness and low mortality of lambs. Cheviot lambs are usually strong and vigorous at birth, which accounts for their low mortality. They are not as rapid maturing as are most of the Down breeds.

Fig. 9—Champion Cheviot ewe at Chicago International Live Stock Exposition, 1927.

Corriedale.

The Corriedale breed is one of recent origin in New Zealand. It is the result of mating Lincoln rams and Rambouillet ewes. Through continued selection, the Corriedale type was fixed. Their size, hardiness and mutton qualities have led to their extensive use in New Zealand. They have not yet become popular in Canada or the United States due to the fact that they are a comparatively new breed of sheep.

Fig. 10—Champion Corriedale ram at Chicago International Live Stock Exposition, 1927. Bred and exhibited by King Bros. Co., Laramie, Wyoming.

Merino and Rambouillet.

In the early days the sheep on the western ranges were of the Merino breed, a small breed of sheep, but noted for its fine and heavy fleeces, extreme hardiness and banding instinct. No attention was given to mutton qualities, wool being the only source of revenue. The skin of the Merinos covered the body in many folds making the wool growing area on these small sheep large enough to clip fleeces 15 to 20 pounds in weight.

Fig. 11—Champion C Type Rambouillet ram at the American Royal, 1927. Bred and exhibited by King Bros. Co., Laramie, Wyoming.

As the demand for mutton increased, Merinos that had some of the mutton qualities were selected. The improvement of the early Merino from a purely wool producer to that of a wool and mutton producer combined, led to the establishing of three Merino strains, known as A, B and C type Merinos. The A type Merino represents more nearly the early type with the many folds and lacks the mutton qualities. C type Merino represents more nearly the Down breeds in conformation and has no folds in its skin except on the neck. B type Merino represents a type midway between A and C types. Although there has been a lowering of the fleece weight with the improvement of mutton qualities, hardiness and gregariousness has been maintained.

What we now call 'range ewes" still possess considerable of the Merino blood. They are crossed with rams of the mutton breeds for the production of more early maturing lambs with more pronounced mutton qualities. The use of mutton rams cannot be practised on all the ewes for more than one or two years without decreasing to some extent the

hardiness and gregariousness of the ewe flock. For this reason Merino or Rambouillet blood should be introduced to maintain these necessary qualities.

In 1785 France secured a flock of Merino ewes from Spain and through constant selection for many years established what is now known as the Rambouillet breed—a large, robust type of animal possessing many desirable mutton characteristics. The fineness of wool has been lowered to secure the increase in size and mutton qualities, though hardiness and gregariousness has been maintained.

Rambouillet sheep vary somewhat in conformation and may be grouped into two classes that correspond to the B and C type Merino. Mature rams average 225 to 250 pounds and ewes 140 to 175 pounds. They are strong and robust with a body conformation more nearly that of the mutton type than the Merino. Wool growth varies from 2 to 3 inches and fleeces weigh between 10 and 20 pounds. Wool covers the entire body extending to the hoofs and muzzle. The color of hair is white. The rams are horned or hornless and ewes hornless.

The use of Rambouillet rams on the Western ranges of the United States has done much to improve the size, and to maintain the hardiness of the ewe flock. Canadian ranch men are beginning to make use of the Rambouillet blood in ever-increasing amounts.

Leicester.

The Leicester is a popular Eastern breed. It is a breed of fair size, rams weighing between 200 and 225 pounds, and ewes 150 to 175 pounds. They have a broad well fleshed back, and loin, well turned body, with a fair leg of mutton. Compared with some other breeds they appear upstanding. The wool extends to the hocks and knees and forward to the head leaving the head and lower legs bare. The wool is long, measuring 7 to 8 inches, and is fairly coarse, usually grading low staple to common and braid. The fleece averages 8 to 10 pounds in weight. It is an open fleece unsuitable to animals that are liable to exposure or extreme cold. For this reason Leicesters are not as desirable as some of the other breeds for use on the open ranges, but can be successfully raised when suitable shelters are provided.

Leicesters are good foragers and fatten readily under liberal feeding. The Leicesters have been found exception-

Fig. 12.—Champion Leicester ram. Bred and exhibited by G. B. Armstrong, Teeswater, Ont.

ally good for the production of crossbreds, the lambs carrying the fattening qualities, size, and fleece weight of the Leicester as well as the quality of fleece and meat of the Down or other breeds with superior mutton and wool qualities.

Cotswold.

This breed is one of the larger breeds of long wooled sheep, mature rams weighing 250 to 300 pounds and ewes 175 to 200 pounds. They are strong in bone, with a broad, strong top similar to the Leicester. Their wool attains the length of from 8 to 12 inches and is coarser, grading common and braid. The wool has a tendency to part down the back permitting cold rains and low temperatures to penetrate.

Cotswold ewes are prolific, good milkers, and make good mothers. They are said to be somewhat low in carcass quality and do not mature as early as those of the Down breeds. There is also a tendency in the case of the young lambs to lack vitality.

Fig. 13—Champion Cotswold ram at Chicago International Live Stock Exposition, 1927.

Rams have been successfully used on range ewes for the purpose of increasing the size of lambs and weight of fleece.

Lincoln.

The Lincoln is the largest breed of sheep, rams usually weighing over 300 pounds, and ewes 250 to 275 pounds. They possess a heavy frame, with good breadth of back, similar to the other long wooled breeds. The wool is long, usually 12 inches in length, grading common and braid with a fleece weight averaging around 15 pounds. The other characteristics and properties are similar to that of the Cotswold. Lincoln rams have been used successfully on range ewes to increase the weight of fleece and size of ewe flock.

Romney.

The Romney breed is smaller than the Cotswold and Lincolns. The conformation is similar to the Leicester, Lincoln and Cotswold except that the Romney is slightly lower

Fig. 14—Approved type of English Romney.

set. The wool, however, is shorter, denser and finest of all the long wooled breeds, usually grading low staple. They have better mutton qualities than the Lincolns and Cotswold. Having been developed in low marshy districts, Romney sheep are better adapted to low lying lands and are less subject to foot rot than are most other breeds. These superior qualities have led to the Romney breed being popular in New Zealand, Australia and South America for use in crossing with their Merino and Rambouillet range ewes. On the ranges of the United States and Canada, Romney sheep are being used to a limited extent.

Karakul.

The Karakul breed originated in Asia. As no flock records or pedigrees are kept, the purity of the present day Karakuls is unknown. There is a great variation in type and skins. Karakuls are considered fur bearing animals, the pelts of the lambs being called Karakul, Persian Astrakhan and several other names. Suitable pelts have been secured by the mating of ewes of the long wooled breeds with Karakul rams.

Fig. 15—Typical Karakul ram.

The Karakul is of little value comparatively for mutton. Pelts have the highest value when Karakul lambs are one to three days of age. The breed is adapted to extreme temperatures and high altitudes, and do not do well in moist sections and low altitudes.

Romnellet.

This relatively new type of sheep was developed in Alberta by the crossing of Romney and Rambouillet breeds. An effort has been made to secure a breed that carries the constitution and rapid fattening qualities of the Romney and the hardiness, gregariousness and wool quality of the Rambouillet. A number of Romnellet rams are now being used on the range flocks of Alberta.

Fig. 16—A Romnellet ram lamb, bred by R. C. Harvey, Lethbridge, Alberta.

SELECTION OF A BREED.

The different breeds of sheep have been developed under various conditions and with a view to meeting certain definite requirements with respect to such factors as climate, soil, topography, feed supply and market demands. With this in mind it is only reasonable to assume that particular breeds are more adaptable for certain conditions than others. So far as Alberta is concerned, there exists certain local factors that have a bearing on the selection of a breed. The closer wooled breeds have an advantage when it comes to a question of protection against adverse weather conditions. This fact eliminates, to some extent at least, the long or coarser wooled breeds. With respect to market demands, in which is involved such features as weight, early maturity, quality and ability to flesh early, there is a good deal to be said in favor of the Down breeds. Even within this group there is some considerable difference with respect to their adaptability for various requirements. Each have characteristics that are desirable, while on the other hand they all possess, to some degree, certain weaknesses that detract from their popularity.

Undoubtedly the most popular breeds of sheep in Alberta at present, so far as the farm flock is concerned, are: Hampshire, Oxford, Shropshire and Suffolk. The very fact that they have been narrowed down to four breeds makes it reasonably safe to assume that a choice of any one of the particular breeds mentioned would be satisfactory.

The Oxford, and to a lesser extent the Hampshire breed, has been open to criticism on the ground that they are rather late in maturing and fail too often to attain a desired finish before becoming overweight. There is also a tendency towards black fibres in the fleece of both breeds. In case one were making a selection of either of these two breeds it would be advisable to keep in mind that an early maturing, low-set type, free from dark wool fibres with reasonably pink skin should be emphasized. The Shropshire is recognized as a superior mutton sheep with a fleece and skin of good quality; at the same time the heavy wool covering over the eyes, together with the fact that they are comparatively short in leg, means that they have been regarded as being more suitable for smaller areas with good pastures, rather than large farms where pastures are more extensive and in which there is a more or less wooded growth. Suffolk sheep have been gaining in popularity on account of their ability to fatten easily and their quality of carcass. It should be said, however, they are, as a breed, inclined to be bare of wool on the belly, which under Alberta conditions is of some considerable importance from the point of view of protection. Then again the wool of the Suffolk is too often streaked with dark fibres —a condition which lowers its market value.

The question of the selection of a breed is one that each individual will in the end necessarily have to work out for himself. A study of local conditions, a knowledge of the peculiar strength and weaknesses of the various breeds, together with the question of the available supply of breeding stock are all fundamental.

SELECTION OF BREEDING STOCK.

The proper selection of breeding stock is one of the most important factors making for success in sheep raising. No improvement is possible without intelligent choice of both rams and ewes, based on a careful study of the characteristics of the existing flock, and the ideals, or ambitions of the breeder, as developed through an understanding of market trends and conditions.

The Selection of the Ram.

The ram has been demonstrated to represent one-half, or in some cases even more than half the flock. If the ram is not superior to the ewe flock, the lambs produced will not be an improvement on their mothers and consequently no progress will be made from year to year. If, on the other hand, the ram is superior to the ewe flock, the lambs produced should show improvement over the ewes. Since ewe lambs replace the older ewes each year, the improvement of the flock from year to year is only secured by the use of well selected rams.

In purebred flocks the selection of the ram is based upon breed type, as well as mutton type. It is essential in these flocks to maintain uniformity in breed type and correct mutton type. In grade flocks the rams are selected chiefly for mutton type and quality, though conformity to a certain breed type which is secured by the continued use of rams of the same breeding, leads to a desirable uniformity in the market lambs with consequent higher prices.

In the selection of a mutton ram the points to be considered should be as follows:

1. **Breed Type:** The question of breed type is of considerable importance especially in selecting a ram to head a purebred flock. Uniformity of type in both purebred and grade flocks should be the aim of every breeder. This can only be secured by the continued selection of rams possessing the recognized characteristics of the breed to which they belong.

2. **Masculinity** as shown by vigor; boldness, as indicated by full, bright eyes, large nostrils, broad head, short thick neck, and broad forequarters.

3. **Mutton conformation and quality:** Rams of the mutton breeds should be low set, with sufficient bone, and a broad, well turned thickly and firmly fleshed body from brisket to dock. The hind legs should be well filled, with a deep full twist and flank. The skin should be pink and the fleece long, fine and dense, although characteristic of the breed to which he belongs.

The ram should not be heavily fitted, as some show rams are liable to be, since a ram carrying too much flesh is frequantly a slow breeder and sometimes fails to "settle" ewes until he becomes normal in flesh and vitality. Rams in breeding condition should be purchased to secure best results.

4. **Size:** This depends upon the breed of ram being selected. No under-sized ram should be selected as it is liable to produce slower maturing lambs than is desired.

5. **Age:** Immature rams are not as efficient for breeding purposes as mature rams. Inability to serve ewes, disregard for ewes in season, and loss of vitality more often occur when immature rams are used. It is possible, however, to select a suitable ram lamb of the early maturing breeds, dropped early in the season, i.e., January, February or March, with sufficient size and vitality to successfully serve a limited number of ewes. The future development of ram lambs cannot be predicted with as great accuracy as older rams, as lambs often change greatly in their conformation. Experience has proven that when good conformation can be traced through several generations, the chances of securing lambs that maintain their good qualities to maturity are greatest.

Selection of Breeding Ewes.

The quality of lambs and profits, that will be derived from the sheep raising industry in the first, as well as succeeding seasons, are largely dependent upon the selection of foundation ewes and ewe lambs that will compose the future flock. It is fundamental for the beginner as well as for the experienced breeder, that the selection of foundation ewes for the establishment of the flock, and of ewe lambs to replace

Fig. 17—A breeding ewe should show fair size and conform to the lowest thick mutton type.

discarded ewes, should be intelligently made. Through the use of good sires and the retention of the best ewe lambs, considerable progress may be made in the course of four or five years.

As in the selection of rams, breeding ewes should be selected upon their conformity to ideal mutton type, and if purebreds, to breed type also. The chief characteristics that should be looked for in making a selection of ewes for improved mutton qualities are as follows:

1. **Age:** Yearling ewes are regarded as the ideal from the standpoint of age, because their reproductive life has just begun. Their future development does not have to be predicted, and they are usually sound in udder and teeth. There is less speculation attached to the buying of yearlings than with ewes of any other age. Ewe lambs are of necessity selected for the replacement of discarded ewes. The owner necessarily speculates on their future development, and has to maintain them in his flock for a year before they are old enough to breed. Ewes, two-years or older, if selected for foundation stock, cannot be depended upon to reproduce as long as yearlings. Among the older ewes offered for sale may be found those that, for some reason other than broken mouths, unsound udders and lack of development, have been unprofitable to the owner.

2. **General appearance:** Breeding ewes should be well grown, healthy, and active. Undersized, unthrifty ewes should not be selected, as they are likely to produce slow maturing, undersized lambs. Good health is indicated by an active, sprightly appearance, a bright clean pink skin (sometimes occasional dark skinned individuals are found in the dark faced breeds), bright eyes, and by a fleece that is clean, lustrous, and containing plenty of yolk. Poor health may be recognized by emaciation, chronic coughing, a pale skin, dry harsh wool and scouring. Such ewes should not be selected for foundation stock. Emaciation, however, may be due to the ewe suckling lambs, insufficient feed, as well as internal parasites.

The ewes should conform to the desired mutton type. They should be fairly low set, with broad, deep and capacious bodies, carried uniformly throughout—indicating feeding capacity and plenty of space for the embryonic development of the lamb. Such ewes will also usually have plenty of milk to nourish their young. Avoid selecting upstanding, narrow chested, shallow bodied ewes for, as a rule, they are

poor feeders, a disappointment as reproducers and unsatisfactory milkers.

3. **Soundness of teeth and udder:** Without a full set of sound teeth breeding ewes cannot be expected to handle sufficient feed to nourish the unborn or suckling lambs and maintain their own bodies. Ewes with "broken mouths" should be avoided in selecting foundation stock, as their ability to reproduce, "mother" and nourish lambs has been lowered through their difficulty in consuming food.

Occasionally ewes offered for sale have udders which, through accident or disease, are unable to produce milk, or so blemished that milk cannot be drawn from the udder. Such ewes will be unable to nourish their lambs and therefore should not be selected.

4. **Fleece:** Some consideration should be given to the fleece in the selection of ewes. Fleeces not only provide a source of income to the owner, but they should also provide sufficient protection against cold rains and low temperatures normally experienced in Alberta. A fine fibred, compact fleece, of fair length, extending well over the body and especially the belly, provides ample protection and yields a good income.

CATCHING AND HANDLING SHEEP.

The use of correct methods for catching and handling sheep is important, not only to prevent waste of energy and time, but also to prevent injury and discomfort on the part of the animals.

When animals are corralled in a small pen, catching can be most effectively done by grasping the flank, as less struggling on the part of the animal is experienced. In the field the use of a shepherd's crook can be recommended. There is a tendency on the part of inexperienced sheepmen to grasp the animal by the wool. This is an inhuman practice and should be discouraged.

A sheep is most easily led by holding the neck of the animal with one hand and pressing the end of the dock with the other. Pulling by the head or neck causes the animal to struggle and resist being led in this manner.

When heavy sheep are to be placed on their rump for shearing, feet trimming, or any other purpose, the left arm should be placed around the front of the animal and the right hand passed under the body and grasping the hind leg on the

Fig. 18—Sheep can be most effectively caught by grasping the flank.

Fig. 19—The proper way to grasp a sheep to set it on its rump.
Fig. 20—The simplest way to guide sheep.

Fig. 21—Sheep cannot be easily moved when grasped in this manner.

far side as shown in the accompanying picture. By pulling steadily on the leg and raising the forepart of the body the animal is most easily brought to the desired position.

A well trained sheep dog can be used to advantage in facilitating the handling of sheep, especially in large flocks. On the other hand a poorly trained dog may cause considerable worry to the flock and trouble to the shepherd.

ESTIMATING AGE BY THE TEETH.

The age of sheep up to four years can be easily determined by examining the teeth. The mouths of sheep are equipped with a full set of twenty-four molar teeth on the sides of both upper and lower jaws, for the mastication and grinding of food. In addition to these, four pair (eight) of incisor teeth are provided along the front of the lower jaw, which together with the lips, enable the sheep to gather and cut off each mouthful of food. The incisor teeth have been called "nippers," which in itself describes their use. It is the incisor teeth that are examined to determine age.

At about three weeks of age lambs usually possess a full set of eight "milk teeth." These are smaller and narrower

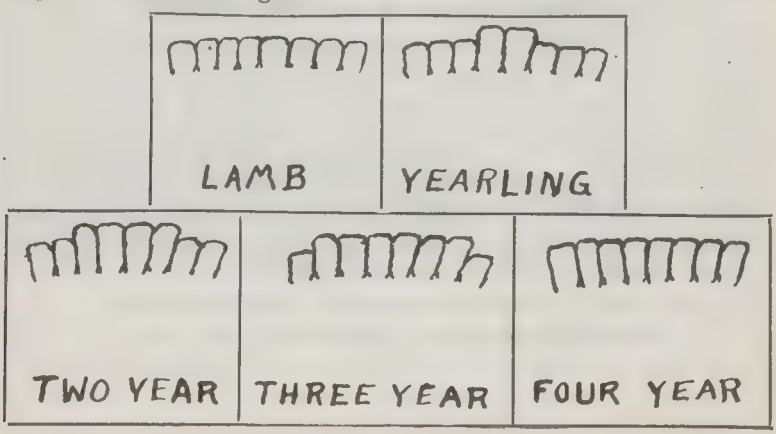
than the permanent incisors. At the age of twelve or fifteen months the center pair of "milk teeth" are lost and replaced by two permanent incisors which can be readily determined by their size. Permanent incisors are longer and broader than the "milk teeth."

Each succeeding year an additional pair of "milk teeth" are replaced by permanent ones in regular order, so that when sheep are four years of age a full set of eight permanent incisors will be found. Sheep with one pair of permanent incisors are one year old; two pair of incisors, two years old; three pair of incisors, three years old; and four pair, four years of age or older. The time at which these changes take place varies with the condition under which the sheep have been kept. With well fed sheep the changes take place slightly earlier than with animals not kept in good condition.

After four years of age there is a tendency for the teeth either to wear down until they become like stumps, or loosen and fall out. It is therefore impossible to tell exactly the age of sheep after they are four years of age. If one or more incisors are missing in mature animals, they are called "broken mouthed," or if all incisors are missing the term "gummer" is given them.

Sheep that have been well cared for and properly fed will often maintain a full mouth until they are seven, eight or even nine years of age, while range sheep or poorly cared for sheep that have suffered many periods of food shortage and exposure to severe weather, begin to lose their teeth at five or six years of age. As soon as ewes become "broken mouthed" their usefulness is much impaired.

The following illustration indicates how the teeth of sheep appear at different ages.



FEEDING AND MANAGEMENT OF THE FLOCK DURING THE BREEDING SEASON.

Feeding.

The breeding season for sheep is normally in the fall and early winter months. It occurs during a season when ewes, due to scant pastures and following a more or less strenuous suckling period, may be in a thin and unthrifty condition. When ewes are in such a condition at breeding time there is a tendency toward the production of a small, unthrifty lamb crop and a lengthening of the breeding season due to some ewes failing to conceive at one or more services. Experiences and experiments have proven that such results can be overcome by the feeding of suitable rations during the breeding season.

When luxuriant pastures are used or when a small quantity of grain is fed with a dry roughage, the ewes will not only be stimulated to gain in weight, but at the same time their reproductive organs will be stimulated to greater activity. Under such conditions the breeding season will not be prolonged, lambs will be more uniform for age and size and, in addition, there will be a greater tendency toward the production of twins and triplets.

The term "flushing" has been given to the feeding practice which has for its purpose an increase in the thrift of the ewes and as a result a more satisfactory lamb crop. The necessity for flushing and the response secured depends upon the condition of the ewe and also on the condition of the pasture and feeds fed prior to the breeding season. It is in the case of the thinner, more unthrifty ewes that the greatest effects of flushing will be secured.

The providing of succulent pasture just prior to and during the breeding season is regarded as the most suitable, as well as the most economical method of flushing. This, however, necessitates early breeding under Alberta conditions, and can therefore only be recommended for farmers with equipment to handle lambs under January, February and March conditions.

Rape pasture has been used for several years at the University of Alberta during the breeding season of purebred ewes. Grouping all ewes of five different breeds together

during the past four years the following number of lambs per ewe have been dropped.

2 year olds	1.71	lambs	per	ewe
3 year olds	1.90	"	"	"
4 year olds	2.04	"	"	"
5 year olds	1.93	"	"	"
6 year olds	1.78	"	"	"

Although not all of the lambs represented by the above figures were raised, it does indicate the benefit which can be secured by the use of a succulent pasture during the breeding season.

No data are available on the comparative merits of the various pasture crops for flushing, but it is logical to assume that there would be very little difference between the various pastures, provided they furnish an abundance of fresh succulent feed throughout the breeding period.

On most farms, however, the breeding season is usually in November and December, when pastures are not available and the flock is under winter feeding conditions. Flushing may be satisfactorily accomplished under these conditions by the use of grain together with a good quality of hay, or still better, hay and silage. Sufficient amounts of these feeds should be fed to stimulate an increase in weight, although it is not necessary to feed excessive amounts of grain. One-half pound of grain per head, per day, together with all the good quality hay they will consume, or one-quarter pound of grain plus two pounds of silage, and a full feed of hay, should be sufficient to produce the necessary thrift and vigor required during the breeding season.

The feeds should be nutritious and provide the necessary constituents for reproduction and flesh building. Feeding carbonaceous rations would not prove as suitable as rations that furnish a fair amount of nitrogenous feeds. For this reason, the addition of alfalfa and sweet clover hays, bran or linseed oil meal would improve the ration.

It may be argued that there is no advantage in triplets or even too many twins. It is true that with large lamb crops the death rate of the lambs is increased, the birth weight of lambs is slightly decreased, and more labor and attention are required. When twins or triplets are born, it is not uncommon for one of the lambs to be small and weak. On account of the loss of these weak lambs, and the lambs crushed by the ewe, or by death through lack of milk, a larger death rate

resulted; but even though this be true, the total number of lambs raised will be increased. Every mature ewe, properly fed, should, in most cases, however, be capable of nursing two lambs. The switching of one triplet to a ewe that only has a single lamb will eliminate some of the difficulties. With the production of a large number of lambs, there will always be a supply of lambs to give to those ewes which have, for various reasons, lost their lambs, and thus most of the ewes in the flock will be doing their share in raising the lamb crop.

It has been possible at the University of Alberta to raise to market weight a lamb crop of over 160 per cent. The extra attention that it is necessary to give in the case of a large lamb crop produced sufficient additional returns to offset any increased labor involved.

Management.

The aim of the sheep owner should be to have his ewes successfully bred within a three or four week period so that the lambing season will not be prolonged. The successful mating of the ewes is, to a large extent, dependent on the management and feeding of the ram. During the breeding season it is advisable to check up on the work of the ram in order to make certain that the ewes are actually being bred. It not infrequently happens that rams, due to various causes, may be non-breeders, or in the case of one or more ewes, certain abnormalities may result in their failing to get in lamb. A little attention at the time, and more especially during the first few days, may avoid considerable disappointment later.

At the beginning of the breeding season the ram should be in a thrifty condition, not carrying a surplus of flesh. Heavy service is a considerable strain on the ram and, unless fed liberally during this season, the result may be a falling off in flesh and a lowering of vitality, which may be reflected in failure to breed or the production of weak and unthrifty lambs from the ewes bred during the latter part of the breeding season.

There are various methods of managing the ram during the breeding season. One of the most common practices, especially in grade flocks, is to allow the ram to run continuously with the ewes. This system works out fairly satisfactorily in small flocks, as the limit for one mature ram

would be between thirty-five and fifty ewes. Less time and attention is necessary when this method is followed.

In large flocks, or when it is desirable to conserve the energy of the ram, there is some advantage in a modification of the above system, when the ram is allowed to run with the ewes during only part of the day. This allows for special feeding of the ram, and makes it possible for him to handle a flock of from fifty to seventy-five ewes.

Under certain conditions it may be an advantage to practice what is known as "hand coupling." Under this system the ram is not allowed to run with the flock, but ewes in season are brought to him for service. Usually a teaser is used. A teaser is an active ram, usually not being used for service, upon which an apron is tied to prevent copulation. He is turned in with the ewes for a short time each day to find those that are in season. By use of this system a ram is capable of serving from seventy-five to one hundred ewes.

Well developed ram lambs may be used. Obviously it is not to be expected that they will handle as large a flock as a mature ram. Given reasonably good care, however, they should be able to take care of from twenty-five to thirty ewes.

In order to keep a check on the ewes as they are bred and become pregnant, lampblack or ochre should be painted upon the breast of the ram before being placed with the ewes. In this way records can be kept of the individual ewes as they become marked. At the end of a 16 or 18 day period the breast of the ram should be painted a different color. By following this practice ewes that are served again in their second "heat" period can be noted and if necessary recorded. If the coloring is changed on the ram every sixteen or eighteen days, the dates on which the ewes are due to lamb can be calculated and proper care given them during that time.

The painting of the breast of the ram has an additional advantage in that it is possible to determine how successful a breeder he is. If a large number of the ewes continue to be bred at each successive period the owner knows that the ram is either infertile or for some other reason is not settling the ewes. If certain ewes continue to be bred at each successive period, then one may have reason to suspect that something is abnormally wrong with the ewes; they may be infertile, due to abnormal or inactive genital organs or to obstructions, such as too long a dock or tags that make mating impossible.

WINTER FEEDING AND MANAGEMENT.

Feeding.

Experiments conducted at the University of Alberta for the past eight years have shown, beyond a doubt, that the fleece weight and the strength and size of lambs are greatly influenced by the rations fed during pregnancy. Since practically all the income from sheep is derived from these two sources, the importance of winter feeding can be readily seen.

Certain feeds may be suitable from the standpoint of maintaining the flock in a satisfactory condition of flesh, or for fattening, but fail to provide a ration that will be sufficient for the development of strong, vigorous lambs. Soft, flabby, undersized, weak, goitred, and dead lambs take heavy toll each year in many flocks, a condition which can be traced, in many cases, to improper feeding of ewes during their pregnancy period. Unless the ewes receive the food constituents from which lambs and wool can be produced, fair sized, strong lambs, and normal wool growth cannot be secured.

Considerable experimental work has been conducted at the University of Alberta during the past eight years with a view to securing definite information with respect to the suitability of the common Alberta roughages, when fed both singly and in combination to pregnant ewes. The results of the earlier experiments were reported in Bulletin No. 1 issued a few years ago. The findings of these trials showed that certain feeds were unsuitable. The more recent work has been outlined to find out what supplements could be fed in conjunction with the more unsuitable hays, when these form a portion of the ration, in order to secure stronger and better developed lambs.

The following discussion in connection with the various feeds is based on the results of these trials.

Alfalfa Hay:

Alfalfa hay is probably the only single roughage that contains a sufficient amount of all the required nutrients to carry the ewes successfully through the winter. During three winter trials the ewes were fed an average of 3.9 pounds of Alfalfa daily. They were maintained in a better condition of flesh, gave birth to heavier lambs and produced heavier

fleeces than was the case where they were fed any of the other single hay rations. In the Alfalfa districts of Alberta it is the cheapest roughage. In non-Alfalfa districts the cost of baling and transportation may be too high to make the feeding of Alfalfa advisable.

Sweet Clover Hay:

In districts where alfalfa cannot be grown, sweet clover hay has proven a fairly good substitute as a roughage for wintering ewes. Although its protein content will compare favorably with alfalfa, it is not as palatable a roughage as alfalfa hay. On account of its coarser nature more difficulty is experienced in curing than in the case of alfalfa. For this reason, much of the sweet clover available for sheep feeding lacks the quality found in alfalfa.

Prairie Wool:

Prairie wool is usually composed of a mixture of grama, western wheat grasses and dry land sedges. Spear grass may also be found, and if present in large amounts it is not safe to feed to sheep. Prairie Wool occasionally contains considerable dead grass from the previous year, its presence lowering its nutritive value. Prairie Wool of good quality is the most nutritious of the native grass hays, and will maintain the ewes in a fair condition of flesh throughout the winter when fed as the sole ration.

Upland Prairie Hay:

Upland Prairie Hay is composed of varying amounts of Blue, Western Rye, Brome, and June grasses. Prairie hay varies widely in composition. Sometimes small amounts of slough grasses, or other coarse and unpalatable plants, are found in Upland Prairie Hay. The greater the proportion of Upland grasses the more palatable and nutritious will be the hay. During the three winter trials, when Prairie Hay of medium quality was fed, ewes receiving an average of 3.3 pounds of hay, lost an average of 21 pounds in weight, but produced strong and fairly good sized lambs. Difficulties arose through weakness and lack of milk in the case of a few of the ewes that had lost considerable weight. In such cases lambs were not properly mothered and became unthrifty. The addition of whole oats, one-quarter to one-half pound daily, depending upon the quality of the hay, maintained the ewes in satisfactory condition, increased the size of the lambs,

stimulated wool growth and avoided the difficulties of weakness and lack of milk on the part of the ewes. (See value of silage.)

Slough Hay:

As a general rule, slough hays are coarse, tough, unpalatable and have a low nutritive value. They cannot be satisfactorily fed to sheep, as they will not consume a sufficient quantity of it to supply even their own body requirements.

Oat Hay (Oat Greenfeed) (Oat Green Sheaves):

Oat hay, grown in the Edmonton district, has proven to be a very poor roughage for pregnant ewes from the standpoint of lamb production. Soft, flabby, weak, goitred, partially hairless, and dead lambs were produced. Some years only a few lambs reached market age, while other years eighty per cent. of those produced were marketed. At the Wisconsin Experiment Station it was found in trials with dairy cows that the Oat plant, when used as the sole feed for pregnant cows, was deficient in minerals and produced small and weak calves, with a few cases of abortion. Reports received from certain districts have shown that normal lamb crops are produced in some years at least, when oat hay alone is fed. Whether poor results from Oat hay feeding is limited to goitrous districts remains to be proven. Oat hay, however, has proven to be almost equal to Alfalfa hay for maintaining the ewes in a satisfactory condition of flesh.

In those districts where Oat hay is the principal roughage it can be satisfactorily used as the sole ration, providing it is supplemented with potassium iodide. Keeping in mind the fact that variety is an advantage in any ration, better results will be obtained when other hays or silages are fed along with Oat Hay. This does not, however, eliminate the necessity of feeding potassium iodide.

Brome, Red Top, and Western Rye Hays:

Due to their coarser nature these hays are usually found less palatable and nutritious. Where these hays are available they may be fed in conjunction with other more nutritious hays or, if fed alone, should be supplemented with grain in sufficient quantities to maintain the ewes in a thrifty condition.

Timothy Hay:

The use of Timothy hay should be avoided, on account of its high price, low nutritive value, and injury to skin and

value of fleece. The market price of Timothy hay is usually higher than any other roughage grown in the same district, and, for this reason, its use can not be recommended in preference to other more suitable roughages. It is unpalatable, and too often coarse and brittle, and the dry heads work into the fleece, irritating the skin, making shearing difficult, and lowering the selling price of the wool.

Oat Straw:

Oat straw lacks palatability and is low in nutritive value. At this institution ewes fed on oat straw alone lost so much flesh, and became so weak, that it was necessary to supplement it with a liberal supply of other feeds in order to keep the ewes alive and put them into a reasonably thrifty condition for lambing.

When fed along with alfalfa, or some other nutritious roughage, or when grain mixtures are fed, oat straw may be fed in small amounts. With the feeding of oat straw, however, the same difficulty was experienced as when oat hay was fed—there was a tendency toward flabby, weak, goitrous and dead lambs. This points to the necessity of properly supplementing rations containing oat straw with potassium iodide.

Value of Silage:

Oat, Sunflower, or Corn silages, provided they are of good quality, may be fed as a part of the ration, provided the complete ration supplies the required nutrients.

Both oat silage and sunflower silage have been fed at the University of Alberta during the past four years, in combination with both oat hay and prairie hay.

Silage was heavily fed, the ewes consuming all they would eat in one hour. The average amount of oat or sunflower silage fed daily was from 3 to 3.5 pounds per ewe. Hay was also full fed.

When either of the two silages was fed, the ewes were maintained in a much better condition of flesh than when dry roughages alone were fed. The better maintenance of the ewes was also accompanied by heavier lambs and increased wool growth. Based upon dry matter, one pound of dry silage has a much greater nutritive content than one pound of dry hay.

When the ration consisted of any substantial portion of the oat plant, either in the form of oat hay or oat

silage, or even the combination of the two, the result was the production of varying numbers of weak, goitrous, and dead lambs. This difficulty, however, was overcome by the feeding of potassium iodide.

Where available, silages made from alfalfa or sweet clover, provided they are of good quality, can also be fed. The fact that silages made from these two legumes are comparatively rich in protein suggests that they are better adapted for feeding with carbonaceous hays.

Silages made from Canadian thistles, or grasses other than have been mentioned, should not prove injurious to pregnant ewes, providing the normal chemical changes have taken place in the silo and that they are free from mold or poisonous plants.

Roots:

Turnips and mangels are relished by the flock during the winter and where one takes the trouble to grow these it will be found that they add succulence and variety to the ration.

The Use of Grain Mixtures in Winter Rations:

Whether or not grain need be fed depends upon how well the roughage ration maintains the ewes in a thrifty condition. When roughages of poor quality are fed it may be necessary to supplement with grain in order that the lambs may be well developed and the ewes have sufficient milk at lambing time.

After lambing, grain feeding is advisable to meet the increased needs of the ewes for milk production. Oats is possibly the best single grain that can be fed during this period. The addition of a small amount of bran and linseed oil meal or both would be an advantage under certain conditions. It is well to feed from ¾ to 1 pound of grain per head daily until the ewes go to grass.

Management.

During the winter the flock should be provided with a suitable shelter. An expensive building is not necessary to properly house the flock. Single ply board or straw sheds will provide the essential requirements. The main features to keep in mind are that the building should be located on high dry ground, should be kept clean, well bedded and properly ventilated, and of sufficient size to avoid crowding. It should also be well lighted, as sheep do not thrive as well

when kept in dark quarters. From 10 to 15 square feet of ground space should be provided for each ewe.

Exercise during the winter months is very important, as it promotes thriftiness in ewes and results in stronger lambs. Sufficient exercise may be secured by the providing of yards of sufficient size. Except when storms prevent, feeding can be done out of doors, and if feeding racks are placed some distance away from their shelter this will induce the ewes to take a greater amount of exercise.

There is danger of abortions during the winter through injuries caused in various ways. Principal among these is the jamming of ewes in their effort to get through a narrow door or between obstacles that are close together. This may be overcome by providing doors of good width and by careful handling of the flock.

Before the flock is turned out on grass it is advisable to give some attention to the feet. Foot rot, deformed feet, crooked legs, and broken down pasterns are often due to lack of attention in this connection. The hoof should be cut

Fig. 22—Showing one trimmed and one untrimmed hoof.

down level and the toes trimmed. This may be done with the use of an ordinary knife, pruning knife or toe clippers.

Attention should also be given to prevent fleeces from becoming filled with chaff and thereby decreasing their value. For this reason the flock should not be allowed access to straw stacks or be fed from improperly constructed feed racks. Combination racks, which provide for both grain and roughage feeding, when closely boarded to within 5 or 6 inches of the bottom, prevent chaff from falling into the fleeces. The accompanying picture shows one type of such feed rack. From 18 to 20 inches of rack space should be provided for each ewe and a 10 foot rack from which both sides are used would therefore accommodate from 12 to 14 ewes. Feeding on the ground may also be done, but under this system considerably more feed is wasted.

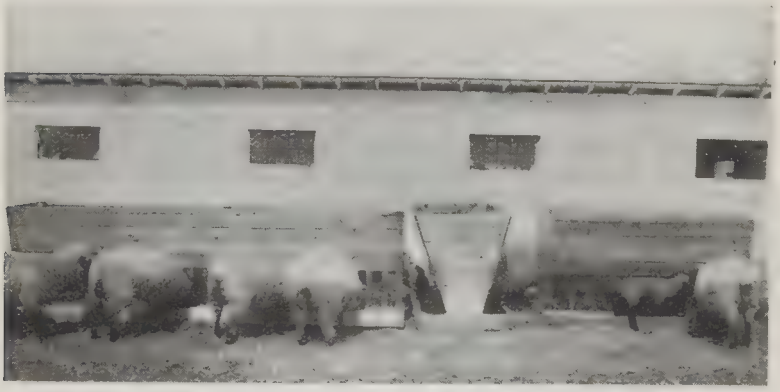


Fig. 23—Properly constructed feed racks mean a saving in feed as well as maintaining a clean fleece.

Water should be provided daily even when snow is available, to insure that their needs for water is supplied. Salt is also necessary, and in districts where goitre has occurred the Potassium Iodide salt mixture is recommended. For information concerning the use of this mixture the reader is referred to the section of the bulletin dealing with sheep diseases.

CARE OF EWES AND LAMBS DURING THE LAMBING SEASON.

If best results are to be obtained it is essential that considerable attention and care be given to the flock during the lambing period. It is at this time that more losses, ailments and difficulties occur than during any other season. Since the majority of lambs in Alberta are born in April and May, the lambing season takes place while the ewes are still under winter feeding conditions, although the temperature is usually high enough during most of the time to make close confinement in the barn unnecessary. Some farmers with small flocks have been successful in allowing the ewes to lamb around straw stacks or in the barnyard. There is danger, however, especially with larger flocks, of many avoidable lossess occurring by such practice, since close observation and individual attention cannot be given the flock.

When the lambing season approaches and particularly when no record has been kept of the date each ewe was bred, the flock should be watched carefully each day and those ewes that show signs of lambing may, if necessary, be separated from the main flock where they may be given special attention and feed, in order to reduce losses to a minimum.

The enlarging of the udder and vulva can usually be noted a few days before the ewe is to lamb. As the time for lambing approaches the ewe becomes restless, may refuse to eat, and usually separates herself from the flock. The observation of these symptoms enables special attention to be given to the ewes and lambs during the time when losses are most likely to occur.

It will facilitate the handling of the flock if provision can be made for small pens in which the ewes can be placed a few days before and after lambing. Hinged, or movable partitions can be so arranged to provide the pens necessary within the larger winter shelter. Lambing pens should never be crowded because lambs may be trampled, crushed, or become separated from their mothers. Crowded lambing pens may result in lambs that will suckle any ewe, and may also produce ewes, which through continual separation from their lambs, may disown one or both of them. It may be necessary to clip off loose wool tags and dung locks around the hind

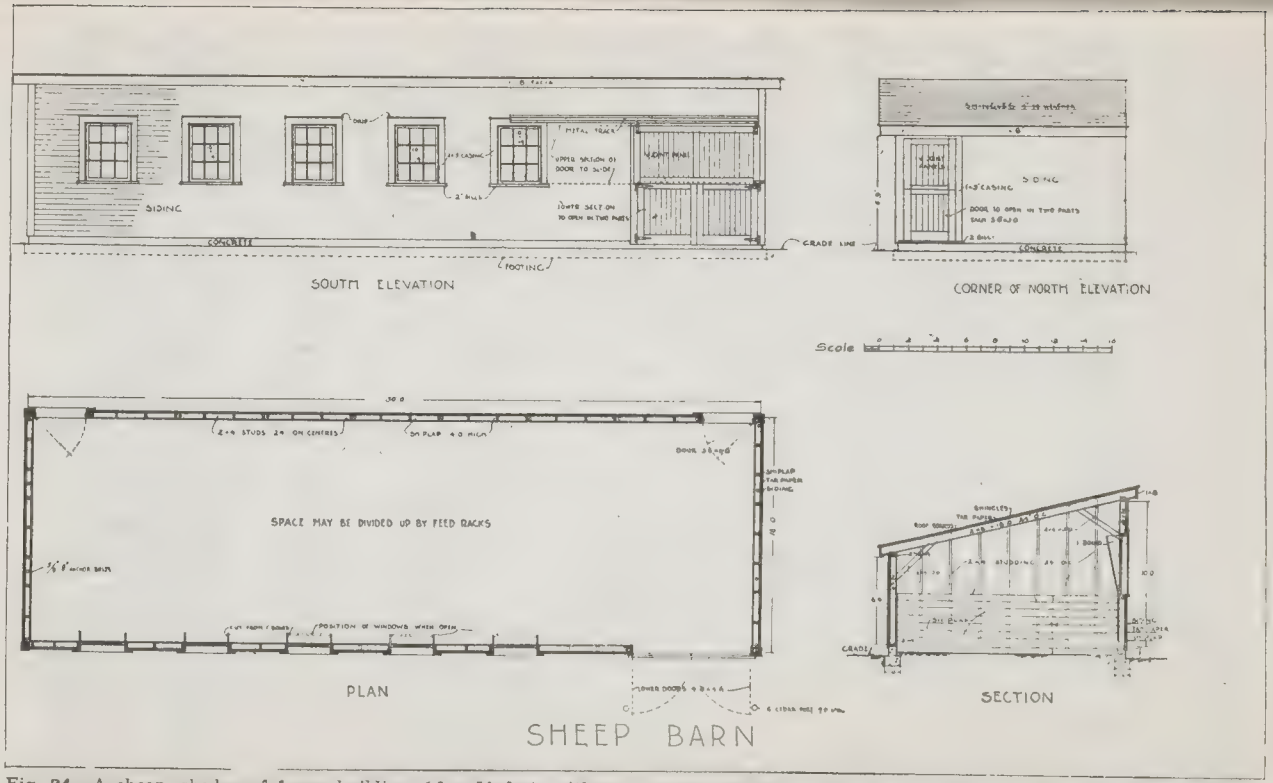


Fig. 24—A cheap, shed-roof frame building, 16 x 50 feet, without any interior fittings, but suitable in every way for keeping sheep. A hundred ewes can be wintered comfortably in it. Publi hed by permission of Professors Grieg and Shaw, Univ. of Saskatchewan.

quarters and udder of the ewes. This will not only make it easier for the young lamb to nurse, but will at the same time prevent avoidable loss caused by wool balls in the stomach of the young lamb.

The pregnant ewes, after being placed in the lambing pen, should be watched closely until the lambs have arrived. in order that proper care and attention may be given at this particular time.

There are various difficulties which may arise during the lambing season, for which assistance or attention on the part of the attendant is needed to prevent serious losses.

Ewes when laboring sometimes lie in a position so near the wall that it is impossible to expel the lamb. Careful observation is necessary to prevent this occurrence, as too long a delay will cause the death of the lamb in the uterus.

Lambs are born enclosed in a covering which if not ruptured during birth must be removed from the nostrils immediately after birth. In most cases either the struggling of the lamb or action on the part of the ewe performs this duty, but in a few cases she fails to do so, due to the fact that she is either too weak, is busy expelling the second lamb, or only gives attention to one of her lambs. Breathing must be established within a few minutes, and this can only be done when the covering has been removed.

Lambs born during cold weather often become chilled to such an extent that death may result unless proper treatment is given. Such lambs are often immersed in warm water and rubbed dry with a woolen cloth to stimulate the circulation blood. A chilled lamb can be warmed by placing it in a box near the stove, or providing the box with a hot water jug enclosed in a blanket. Milk taken from its mother should be fed until it is strong enough to suckle. In severe cases the administration of a few drops of whiskey in a little water. or a diluted solution of spirits of ammonia, will prove beneficial.

Occasionally apparently lifeless lambs are dropped. Immediate attention must be given these lambs to revive them. The mucus in the nostrils and mouth should be first removed. Vigorously massaging the body, especially just back of the forelegs, as well as the movement of the forelegs, similar to resuscitating a person from drowning, will usually stimulate life processes.

Not infrequently the ewe has difficulty during parturition, due to one or more of many causes, in which cases mechanical assistance is required. Excessive size of lamb or abnormal presentation of lamb are among the most common.

Other difficulties are expulsion of the lamb bed (inversion of the uterus), retention of afterbirth and inflammation of the udder. The prevention and treatment for the above ailments are fully discussed in the section on diseases.

The problem of transferring a lamb to a foster mother arises in every fair sized flock. When lambs are born dead, or die soon after birth, the mother can often be given a lamb to raise. An orphaned lamb, or a twin or triplet, can be given to such ewes. Such practices make the bottle feeding of orphaned lambs unnecessary, and increases the rate of gains in the case of twins or triplets.

Many methods have been tried to induce ewes to adopt lambs. One of the earliest methods was to skin the ewe's dead lamb and tie the pelt upon the one to be adopted. This method is still practiced. If a ewe loses her lamb at birth she may be encouraged to adopt another lamb by smearing it with some of her "cleanings." Isolation of ewe and lamb into a small pen should follow such practice. It may be necessary to hold the ewe to allow the lamb to suckle for the first few days. Many believe that the ewe will "mother" the lamb as soon as the lamb passes feces formed from the foster mother's milk.

Bottle feeding of lambs is sometimes necessary when milking ewes are not available to adopt them. For this purpose a wide-necked bottle with a nursing nipple to it is used. In bottle feeding there are a few things to be kept in mind, especially in the early stages—small amounts at frequent intervals, milk of blood temperature, and cleanliness of nursing bottle and nipple.

METHODS OF IDENTIFICATION.

It is essential in purebred flocks, and is desirable in even grade flocks, that some method of identification be used. It facilitates the keeping of records as a basis for registration in purebred flocks and in the case of grade flocks assists materially when it comes to selection and culling.

There are several methods of marking. The placing of metal tags in the ears is the most common and possibly the most satisfactory method. Usually, the initials of the owner

are placed upon one side of the tags. Consecutive numbers are placed upon the other face of the tag. In purebred flocks, letters representing each year are placed before the numbers, e.g., A 47, B 47, C 47, etc., representing a lamb born in 1927, 1928 and 1929 respectively. Ear tags can be placed in the ear at any time after birth without causing the ear to droop, providing the tag is placed fairly close to the head.

Ear notching is another method, and one that may lend itself to use in grade flocks or where it is desirable to identify lambs from different sires and for identification of ownership in the case of mixed flocks.

Tatooing of numbers or letters in the ear may be used. It has been used chiefly in the grading of rams, where XX or XXX has been tatooed on the inner side of one ear to denote whether the ram was judged suitable for use in a grade or purebred flock respectively.

DOCKING.

The value of docking needs very little discussion. Practically every sheep owner realizes the importance of it and performs the operation without questioning its necessity. The operation is simple, requires little time, and there is practically no danger of loss if properly done.

When the tail is not removed manure adheres to the wool on the tail and around the anus, making a good place for invasion of maggots. Undocked lambs do not present as trim and attractive appearance as compared with docked lambs, and for this reason the former are discriminated against when offered for sale. The effect of leaving ewe lambs undocked may be even more serious than in the case of market lambs, as the presence of the tail with its accumulated filth may interfere during the breeding season in preventing normal service.

Docking should be done when the lambs are between five and fourteen days old. Lambs should not be castrated the same day, as the shock suffered by both operations may be too severe. The younger the lambs are docked the less severe is the effect, although it is not advisable to dock lambs before strength and thriftiness have been established.

The tail should be removed at the second joint from the body. There are two general ways of docking, one by searing and the other by cutting, the only difference being that in

Fig. 25—Docking by knife or searing iron is easily done.

the first case the end of the dock is seared over, preventing the loss of blood, and when the dock is cut off with a sharp knife the dock is not seared and allows a greater loss of blood.

There are two principal kinds of searing irons, one shaped like a chisel, the other a hinged instrument, that sears through from both sides. The irons are heated to a cherry red. The operation should be quickly done to prevent the heat from burning the anus or vulva. When a docking chisel iron is used the lamb can be held as shown in picture (Fig. 25 lower). When the hinged searing iron is used the tail is usually pulled through a hole in a board one inch in thickness, removing tail flush with board.

When searing irons are not hot enough or if the operation is not quickly done the tissues become more or less inflamed, and usually a thick scab is formed under which infection may develop. The thickness of the scab prevents the skin around the sore from closing up. This condition and the presence of pus delays healing, so that the wound of lambs docked with the searing iron heals less quickly in most cases than when the knife is used.

Docking with a sharp knife is more quickly accomplished and less equipment is required. The sharper the knife the more easily the operation is accomplished. The lamb can be held as shown in Fig. 25 (top), and the tail removed by cutting through from the top or from underneath. One man can perform the operation, while when using searing irons two men are required. Blood flows freely from the freshly cut dock. Usually the flow of blood is rapid for about ten seconds. Within one minute the flow of blood generally ceases. However, in a few cases the rapid flow of blood may continue, and in such cases it is necessary to tie a string around the dock to save the life of the lamb. When this is done the string should not be allowed to remain on longer than necessary. To prevent infection it is desirable to apply a disinfectant to the dock after the operation and thus insure rapid healing.

CASTRATION.

All male lambs, not intended for breeding purposes, should be castrated. Uncastrated lambs, after reaching fifty to sixty pounds, are continually worrying the ewe flock. This results in slower gains being made by not only the lambs, but that of the ewe flock also. If ram lambs are allowed to

remain with the ewes during the latter part of August and September, there is danger of "catch" breeding, which makes the handling of the flock in early spring more difficult.

Ram lambs produce a carcass of undesirable conformation with a more or less pronounced strong taste. The sale of these carcasses in large quantities tends to lower the normal consumption of lamb, and, therefore, injures the lamb industry. To overcome this effect, the livestock buyers at the present time are descriminating against uncastrated lambs by making a nominal cut in the prices they pay up to October 1st. Following this date a more drastic cut in price is made, sufficient to make castration a profitable practice to follow.

Castration is not a difficult operation to perform. It should be done on a warm, clear day. If the day be cool and damp, the lambs become chilled and death may follow. Even if death does not take place, there may be a lowering of the vitality and thrift of the lambs for a shorter or longer time. Dry, clean quarters should be provided to prevent infection from manure and filth.

Lambs are usually castrated at between seven and fourteen days of age. When this operation is performed at a younger age, a large percentage of the lambs may lack sufficient strength to withstand the shock. When older than fourteen days, severity of the shock is increased and the recuperation extended over a longer period.

There are two ways in which castration can be done. Most authorities claim that after the lower third of the scrotum is removed the testicles can be squeezed out sufficiently to be grasped with fingers or teeth and pulled out.

The second method of castration after one-third of the scrotum is removed is similar to that of castrating pigs or calves, where the testicular, or outer covering, is cut, exposing the testicle. In the case of lambs, however, it is necessary to exercise considerable care not to cut too deeply into the testicle, in which case its removal is difficult. Difficulty may be experienced when the first few lambs are castrated, but as soon as the positions and manipulations are learned this method of castration becomes simple.

Before castrating, the hands of the operator, the knife, and the scrotum should be washed with a good disinfectant.

Immediately after castrating, the empty scrotum should be rinsed out by lifting up the scrotum and pouring disinfectant into both cavities from a bottle.

Even though plenty of disinfectant is used, infection may enter. This is indicated by a swollen scrotum that may be easily detected a few days to two weeks after castrating. The enlarged scrotum is due to closing up the wound before all infection has drained out. It should be opened up to allow the necessary drainage, and again disinfected.

SHEARING AND HANDLING OF FLEECES.

In ordinary practice sheep are shorn only once each year, usually in the spring or early summer, after the cold weather has passed. Earlier shearing will often necessitate some extra provision for shelter or protection to avoid losses, while, on the other hand, more or less loss of fleece and discomfort to the sheep results if the wool is left on for any considerable length of time after the warm weather arrives.

Shearing is best done on a bright warm day and when the wool is dry. In order to prevent the fleece from becoming dirty, the work should be done on a clean floor or sod. In the event these are not available, a canvas will be found very useful.

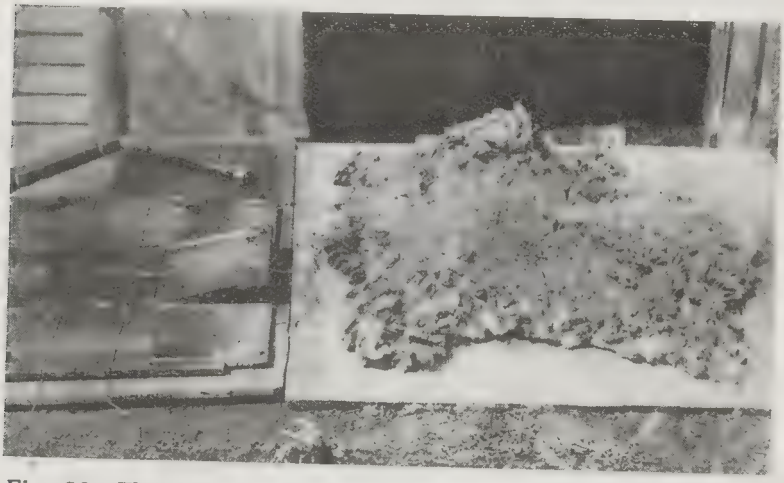


Fig. 26—Fleeces should be removed intact, rolled from rump to shoulder with skin side out to give each fleece a good appearance and to enable proper grading.

Two methods of shearing are common. One is by use of hand shears and the other with the machine clipper. The machine method of shearing has proven most rapid, and when the flock is fairly large it will justify the purchase of one of these machines. With the use of the machine the fibres are cut closer to the body and a smoother appearance given to the shorn animal than by hand clipping. There is also less danger of cutting the animal and making second cuts of the fibre.

There is no single method of shearing which is recognized as the best. Practically all experienced shearers work with the animal held upon its rump, leaning slightly toward the operator, in which position most parts of the animal's body is readily reached with the shears and less struggling on the part of the animal is experienced. As a rule, the practice is to start by opening up the fleece on either the side or under side of the neck and from this opening shearing head, neck and usually the belly. The wool on the sides and the back can then be removed by long sweeping strokes of the shears. The aim of the shearer should be to shear reasonably close to the skin, avoiding cutting the animal, or making second cuts on the fleece and secure a fleece with the neck, back and sides intact to enable proper tying and grading.

The intact fleece should be then placed shorn side down, all dung locks and tags removed and the edges folded in to

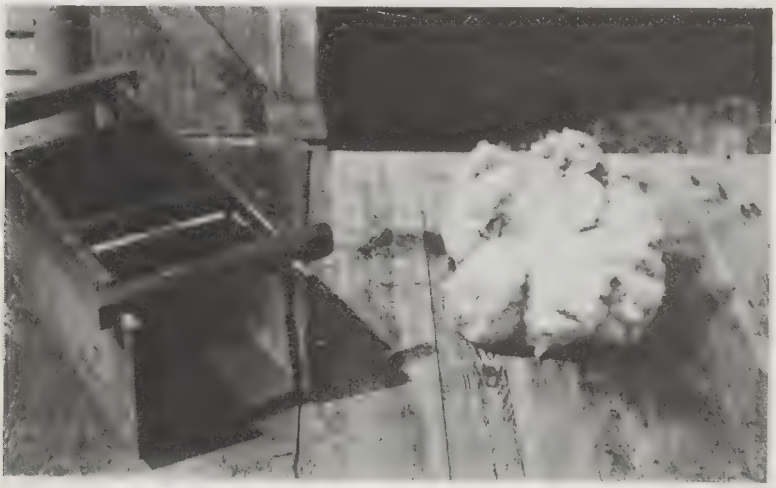


Fig. 27—The use of the wool box adds to the appearance and ease of packing.

form a strip not over two feet in width, then rolled from rump to shoulder so that the best grade of wool is on the outside. It should be tied only with paper twine, as other kinds of twine tangle up with the fibres of the wool and lower the selling price of the fleece.

The use of a wool box for tying gives to the fleece an attractive appearance. Fleeces that have been boxed are more compact and can be readily packed into the large shipping sacks. Satisfactory tying of the fleece can be done, however without the use of a box, providing the fleece is carefully removed.

The Canadian Co-Operative Wool Growers, Limited, maintains assembling and shipping stations in all provinces in the Dominion and have proven a satisfactory medium through which a large volume of the Canadian clip is now marketed.

DIPPING.

In most flocks it is usually found necessary to dip at least once each year to insure freedom from ticks and lice. Dipping also has an additional advantage in the improvement of the skin and wool. The most favorable time is in the spring, shortly after the sheep have been shorn. At this time the entire flocks, both ewes and lambs, should be dipped. In badly infested flocks, it is sometimes necessary to dip twice yearly, the second dipping usually being done in the fall before cold weather has arrived.

A warm bright day should be selected when the fleeces are dry, and dipping is preferably done in the morning so as to give the sheep a chance to dry out again before night. Many kinds of sheep dips, both in liquid and powder form are procurable and, provided they are properly used, they should give satisfactory results.

A galvanized zinc, cement, or wooden tank set in the ground with the top level with the surface should be provided. In addition, suitable pens and runways facilitate the handling of the flock and prevents wastage of the dip. In the dipping of sheep it is necessary to see that each animal remains in the tank until the fleece is well soaked. The draining pen is so arranged that all the dip which runs off the sheep flows back into the vat.

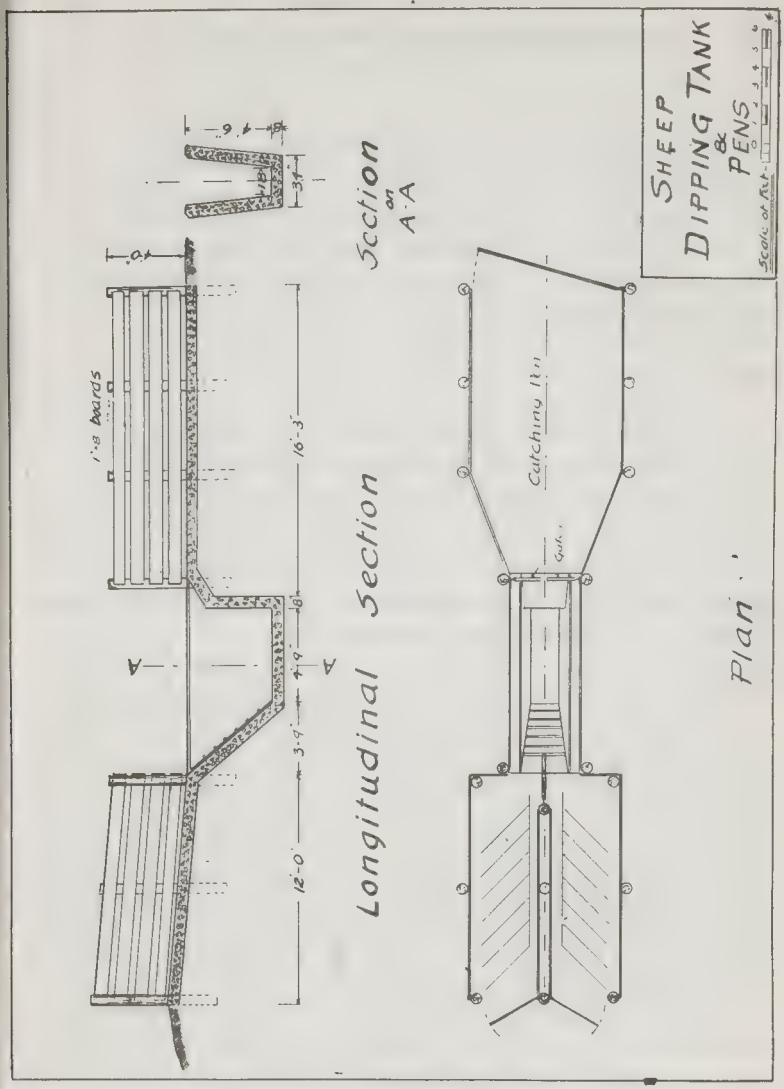


Fig. 28—Drawing showing arrangement of dipping tank and pens suitable for medium-sized flocks.

SUMMER FEEDING AND MANAGEMENT.

Provided suitable pastures are available the flock may be carried through the season with very little if any supplementary feeding. On some farms there is a certain amount of native pasture available which will provide plenty of grass for the flock throughout the season. Summerfallow and stubble fields may in certain seasons be utilized to help out as a sheep pasture. There are many districts in the Province where most of the land is under cultivation, and under such conditions it may be necessary to plan for cultivated crops to meet the needs of the flock.

Fall Rye:

This pasture provides the earliest of all cultivated pastures. It is also the earliest pasture to be finished, for as soon as heading takes place it is coarse, unpalatable, and provides little vegetation. After the rye has been pastured the field may be reseeded to rape or some other suitable pasture which makes possible the utilization of such fields for a succession of crops during one pasture season. For best results fall rye should be seeded in the middle of summer the year previous, at the rate of about three bushels per acre.

Oats:

Oats can be seeded in the spring at the rate of three bushels per acre as soon as the land is tillable. It reaches a growth of about eight inches in five to six weeks, at which time the flock is turned on. This pasture induces fair gains for both ewes and lambs. Unless kept well and evenly pastured the oats will become mature, coarse and unpalatable. During the latter part of the summer, this pasture shows little growth and does not provide as much fodder as it does during the early summer months. In some cases it is possible to plow and reseed these fields to rye in August which will provide late fall and spring pasture.

During periods of wet weather there is usually more or less waste in the case of oat pasture due to the fact that the ground is soft, the growth rank, and a considerable portion of the crop will be lost by tramping.

There is an advantage in seeding two or more fields to oats at intervals of three or four weeks to provide a succession of pastures. After the flock has eaten down the first

seeded pasture and removed to the second, it will be found that in a few weeks the earlier seeded field will have sufficient second growth for repasturing.

Oats and Rye Pasture:

This mixed pasture has been used for several years at the University. Although it does not result in the animals making better gains than on oat pasture alone, it provides feed for a longer period—the rye providing fodder after the oats have become mature or fail to provide sufficient growth. Another advantage of this mixed pasture is that it provides an early fall rye pasture the following spring. The seeding of one and one-half bushels of oats and one and one-half bushels of fall rye per acre has proven satisfactory.

Rape:

Rape pasture is one of the best pastures for sheep, both ewes and lambs make more rapid gains than on oat or oat and rye pastures. For fattening lambs after weaning, or ewes for market, or for flushing ewes prior to and during the breeding season, rape pasture can be recommended. It is a middle summer to late fall pasture since the early seeded rape makes slow growth during the cooler spring months. During the warmer months of summer and late fall the growth is rapid so that rape pasture allows heavier pasturing than on cereal grain pastures. Seeding broadcast at the rate of from five to six pounds per acre is the general practice.

Rape may cause bloat when the animals are first placed on the pasture. This is especially true if sheep are turned on while the rape is wet with rain or dew. Placing them on rape when the field is dry and the animals have been liberally fed other feeds will largely eliminate this danger. The animals should soon become adjusted to the rape pasture and can be kept on it through rains and heavy dew without danger of bloat. When sheep or lambs are confined to rape alone there may be more or less scouring. Better results may be obtained from pasturing rape if the flock have access to a grass field.

Alfalfa:

Although alfalfa has proven to be a nutritious pasture crop, it is very liable to cause bloat in sheep. When alfalfa is used as a pasture crop for sheep it is necessary to exercise care especially when first turned in. Extreme losses may be

avoided by not turning the sheep in when hungry, or when the plants are wet with dew or rain. Dry, fairly well matured alfalfa is less liable to cause bloat than wet immature alfalfa pasture, and for this reason precaution should be taken in placing sheep on alfalfa. A number of experienced sheepmen in the irrigated districts of Southern Alberta usually avoid the use of alfalfa pasture as far as possible.

Sweet Clover:

It is adapted to practically all types of soil, and may be more widely grown in the Province than alfalfa. It supplies a large volume of pasture and is a crop that might very well receive considerable consideration by more sheepmen in Alberta. There is also less danger from bloat than in the case of alfalfa, very little difficulty being experienced in this connection, providing reasonable precautions are taken.

Red Top, Brome, Western Rye:

These and other permanent grasses or mixtures of these make suitable sheep pastures throughout the season. They are most palatable and tender during the early months, but become tough and unpalatable unless pastured heavily enough to prevent the grass from becoming mature.

Some form of shelter should be provided while on pasture to protect the animals during severe storms and from the direct rays of the sun. Trees are possibly the best natural shelters, but if these are not available and winter shelters are long distances away from the sheep pastures, temporary shelters may be provided. When placed on well drained ground, straw or board roof shelters open on all sides are satisfactory.

During the summer, sheep should be watered at least once daily, or if possible water should be available at all times. Salt should be provided regularly or made available to the flock so they may take it when needed. Block salt is suitable. Coarse salt kept in boxes may be used, but when this is done it should be kept under cover to prevent leaching and loss by rains.

WEANING.

Lambs are usually weaned when from 4 to 5 months old. At this age the lambs have reached the stage when they will receive no setback provided suitable pastures are provided. Weaning at this time allows some time for the ewes to regain

flesh and condition before the breeding season arrives. It is also necessary in purebred flocks, when ram lambs are being retained, to wean before the rams have reached the age when there is danger of the ewes being bred.

Since it is desirable to dry up the ewes as quickly as possible, they should be placed on a scant pasture or dry feed. Every two or three days for the first week the condition of the udder should be noted and, if necessary, milked out in order to prevent serious udder trouble. After all danger in this connection is over they should be placed on good pastures to fit them for the breeding season.

At weaning time the lambs should be provided with as good a pasture as possible. In case the pasture is not particularly good, grain feeding at this time may be advisable. In purebred flocks ram lambs should be separated from the ewes.

Weaning time affords a good opportunity for the culling of the breeding flock, for the selection of ewe lambs to be retained, and at the same time to compare the relative merits of various rams that have been used as sires during the past season in the flock. Such work is best accomplished when breeding records have been kept and lambs have been marked. Errors may be avoided, such as culling ewes that, due to their being heavy milkers and good mothers, may be relatively thin and lack condition. Records of the breeding flock are also of material assistance as a basis for the selection of lambs to be kept for breeding. The progeny of the best breeding sires in the flock can in this way be maintained and greater uniformity in the flock be developed. Where more than one sire has been used in the flock the result of each mating can be observed and this offers a guide in determining the most satisfactory matings for the following year. Improvement in the type and quality of the ewe flock as well as the lambs is secured only when selection, culling and matings are intelligently made.

LAMB MARKETING.

A study of market demands, receipts, price fluctuations and farm conditions, all have a direct bearing on the economics of marketing lambs.

In former years a well fleshed lamb weighing over 100 pounds was readily sold for the top price. There has been an increasing demand during recent years, however, for lambs

Fig. 29—A choice market lamb.

of lighter weights, until at the present time lambs weighing less than ninety pounds and carrying sufficient flesh are the most desirable. Lambs considerably lighter, provided they carry the required finish, are acceptable. Buyers of lambs discriminate against those that are overweight, undocked or not castrated.

The most ideal market condition would be to have lambs supplied at a steady rate throughout the year. Under present conditions in Alberta, however, this is not an easy matter. The bulk of the lambs usually reach market during the latter part of September, October and November, at which time the price has a tendency to drop. The supply during the winter and early spring months comes from lambs, the majority of which have spent some time in the feed lot. There is a reasonably steady supply of lambs during this time, with the result that prices are usually maintained at a fairly high level. The fact that during the late spring and early summer months comparatively few lambs are available, means that prices usually reach the peak at this time.

The seasonal price fluctuations are dependent on how regularly the market is supplied with lambs. In the fall when the bulk of the lambs are marketed there is usually a drop in price and as the supply of feeder lambs becomes less the price paid for lambs is increased. The highest price paid for lambs usually occurs about May and continues fairly steady until late in the summer when the number of lambs that reach the market increases.

Since most lambs from domestic flocks are born between February and June, the housing, climatic and feeding conditions under which they are reared vary according to the time of birth. The earliest born lambs require better shelters, and must be liberally fed in order for them to reach an earlier and higher priced market than the later born lambs. In addition little or no use can be made of pasture. March and April lambs are born at a time when less elaborate shelters are required. Good use is made of pastures, less grain is fed and the lambs usually reach market in August, September and October. Lambs born in May and June, although requiring little or no shelter when young, usually require an additional feeding period after pasture season closes.

These differences in conditions under which lambs are reared means that there is considerable variation in the cost of producing lambs for early and late markets. Since the shelters, pasture and feed conditions naturally vary on the different farms in Alberta, the question of the market which will prove the most profitable is one that will necessarily have to be worked out by each sheep owner.

SHEEP DISEASES.

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The brief synopsis of some of the diseases of sheep contained in this bulletin is an endeavor to furnish the small sheep owner particularly, who has just started in the sheep business, with the more important and characteristic symptoms of some of the common diseases that might be met with in small flocks. We have endeavored to avoid long treatises when possible and only those remedies have been considered that are easily obtainable, and regarded from the standpoint of ease of application.

Owing to the frequent confusion in diagnosing sheep diseases, it is important to call in a Veterinary Surgeon if one is available, rather than trust too much to one's own ability in distinguishing a disease and prescribing medicines for it. The fact should be emphasized that a disease does not always display identical symptoms in each animal, and only when several are affected may certain general symptoms be present. As a rule, sheep are not as susceptible to disease as other classes of farm animals. But it is common knowledge among sheep men that when a sheep becomes ill, it will quickly succumb, unless a correct diagnosis is made, and the proper treatment promptly and intelligently applied. It is also known by authorities on sheep diseases that medicinal remedies frequently do not have the same effect upon the system as they would with other classes of live stock. This may be due to the intricate and tortuous digestive system, resulting in the slow absorption of any drugs given. One interesting fact should also be kept in mind, and that is, that sheep frequently consume, with apparent relish, forage that other animals will not touch at all. This peculiar feature, as regards diet, may be the cause of sheep being rather prone to digestive disorders. Reports of losses brought to our attention would indicate that a very large percentage of sheep troubles can be traced directly to disarrangement of the digestive tract.

Administering Medicines.

It has been the common practice with many men unfamiliar with the handling of sheep, when it is advisable to

administer medicines, to set the animal on its rump to drench it. This is unadvisable, and better results will be obtained by standing the animal in a corner and elevating its mouth slightly. In handling the animal in this way, the danger of pouring a portion of the medicine into the lungs, and causing pneumonia, is lessened. The use of a two-ounce syringe is the most convenient way of administering medicine. Under no circumstances should the tongue be held. The mouth should be kept closed and the animal allowed to swallow the medicine slowly. The administration of fluids from a bottle is practised by many, but numerous cases of mechanical pneumonia have resulted from this method. In small lambs a spoon may be used, and by pouching out the lower lip, the medicine may be poured into the cavity so formed.

Dosage.

There seems to be much confusion and misunderstanding as to the amount of medicine given to a sheep. In all diseases, the cases vary greatly with the circumstances. Antidotes for poisoning in sheep are given in enormous quantities, as compared to quantities given to other classes of live stock. The following is a convenient drug table that is well worth remembering:

1 teaspoonful equals 1 dram.
1 tablespoonful equals ½ an ounce.
1 common tumbler contains about 8 ounces, or ½ a pint.
1 common teacup will hold about 8 ounces.

A lamb should be given 1/3 to ½ the size of the dose given to an adult sheep.

DISEASES OF THE RESPIRATORY ORGANS.

Nasal Catarrh (Snuffles).

This ailment is usually the result of exposure to cold or rain, and dipping or shearing too early will often cause it. Sheep and lambs with thin coverings of wool are susceptible. It may also be the result of the invasion of parasites, but in our province this is rare.

Symptoms:

In the acute form there is a clear, watery discharge from the nostrils. Later this becomes thick, stringy and yellowish. The eyes are usually congested and show a discharge. If the animals have been affected for some time, or in other words, if the case becomes chronic, the discharge from the nostrils may become fetid and more yellowish in color.

Treatment:

This trouble may be largely prevented by giving sheep proper shelter in bad weather. It is usually recommended to wash the nostrils out with a 2% solution of Creolin, Cresol or any good coal-tar disinfectant. If the animals are weak or exhausted, they may be given a stimulant, such as Sweet Spirits of Nitre, ½ a teaspoonful in 4 ounces of water, 3 or 4 times a day. Pine-tar may be smeared over the nostrils and the animals should be placed in clean, dry quarters for a few days.

Pneumonia.

Pneumonia in sheep may be brought on by a variety of causes, such as improper drenching, exposure, chills, wet weather and the sequel to Nasal Cartarrh or Bronchitis. It is most prevalent during the winter months, and invariably occurs when the weather suddenly turns cold after the sheep have been dipped. Cold, wet, foggy seasons predispose the animals to pneumonia.

Symptoms:

There is an increase in temperature, a cough, labored respiration and loss of appetite. The animal usually stands, but when it does lie, rests directly on the breast bone. The mucous membranes are congested, and there is frequently a nasal discharge. In lambs, the course of the disease is usually rapid, death taking place in from 2 to 6 days. Older sheep may have a chronic form which lasts from 3 to 6 weeks.

Treatment:

Animals should be isolated and placed in dry, comfortable quarters. Common drenches consisting of flour or bran gruels may be given. Many recommend stimulants, such as Sweet Spirits of Nitre, ½ a teaspoonful in 4 ounces of water, 3 or 4 times a day. When a large number of sheep are affected, the administration of Salicylate of Soda may be given in the drenching solution in the proportion of 2 teaspoonfuls to a gallon.

DISEASES OF THE DIGESTIVE ORGANS.

Bloat.

This condition is a common one in Alberta, and frequently large numbers of sheep are lost from this cause. It may occur from feeding upon wet rape or any wet or frosted grain forage,

but probably the most dangerous is wet alfalfa. It may occur also when sheep have been confined to grass pasturage and suddenly turned upon grain fields in the fall of the year. Occasionally during the past few seasons cases have been reported that were no doubt caused by feeding frozen or mouldy ensilage.

Symptoms:

Evidences of this trouble are readily apparent. It appears first in the distention of the abdomen, particularly noticeable in the left flank. Respirations are labored and the staggering gait is well marked. Death from suffocation usually results.

Treatment:

At the commencement of acute indigestion, the proper treatment would be the administering of anti-ferments and stimulants. The best drug to stop the formation of gases is Aromatic Spirits of Ammonia, the dose being ½ an ounce in 5 ounces of water. Turpentine is also strongly recommended, ½ an ounce in 6 ounces of raw linseed oil would be the proper mixture. A treatment highly recommended by sheep men, where a large number of animals is affected at one time, consists of the following: equal parts of Turpentine, Aromatic Spirits of Ammonia, Formalin, Kerosene and cow's milk are carefully mixed together. The proper dose would be about 2 ounces for an adult sheep. In acute cases, where the administration of medicines have failed, the left flank should be punctured with a clean trocar and cannula.

Impaction of the Rumen.

This condition may be caused by fermenting foodstuffs, or may occur at certain stages of some disease. It is usually, however, due to indigestible foods with insufficient water. In our province, it is often found where the animals have been fed a large quantity of wheat straw and where the water supply is inadequate. It may also occur as the result of insufficient exercise.

Symptoms:

The animal is dull; the mouth is usually dry; there is a loss of appetite and a suspension of rumination; colicky pains are sometimes in evidence; a doughy feeling may be noted in the left flank.

Treatment:

The administration of 4 ounces of Epsom Salts in a quart of lukewarm water should be given at once. To this may be added 2 drams of Aromatic Spirits of Ammonia. In the case of young lambs, 2 ounces of linseed oil may be given in preference to the above. Succulent green feed should be given for several days.

Diarrhea.

The most common form of diarrhea in sheep is sometimes due to disturbances of the digestive tract, the result of spoiled feed or exposure to cold and wet, following shearing. We frequently see it as the result of sudden changes from dry to succulent pastures. In some instances it may also be due to parasites in the intestinal tract.

Treatment:

The cause must be removed before recovery can take place. The feed should be carefully examined and changed if necessary. It is best first to give a purgative such as 4 ounces of castor or raw linseed oil, or the same amount of Epsom Salts, to remove all irritating matter from the digestive organs. If the diarrhea persists, 20 grains of Nitrate of Bismuth in a little milk may be given. Proper care in the way of preventing chills and the placing of affected animals in comfortable surroundings will do much to alleviate the trouble.

Infectious Dysentery.

This disease is caused by the Bacillus Coli Communis. When these bacteria gain entrance into a flock of young lambs, the losses are quite often considerable. Very few outbreaks have occurred in Alberta, and losses attributed to this source may be due to digestive disturbances of ewes, brought about by the feeding of spoiled feed or irritants in the forage.

Symptoms:

When the trouble is due to bacteria, it usually affects new-born lambs, a day or so old. The lambs become dull, there is loss of appetite, weakness, and the eyes grow glassy. The victim soon passes into a stupor, from which there is no recovery.

Treatment:

The first thing to be done is to isolate all apparently sick lambs from the healthy ones. Those affected are best

treated by the administration of 1 or 2 drops of Formalin in a little milk. Some advise the giving of 2 ounces of castor or linseed oil. Lambs affected with the infectious type of the disease usually succumb, and it is an apparently hopeless task to successfully treat them. Prevention is by far the best method of controlling the trouble, cleanliness and sanitation being the weapons used.

Constipation.

In lambs this condition is frequently brought about by wool balls. In animals a month or so old, it may be due to digestive disturbances, resulting from indigestible, dry feed and an insufficient amount of water.

Symptoms:

There will be loss of appetite, uneasiness, colicky pains, roaching of the back and straining.

Treatment:

Two ounces of castor oil should be administered. In addition to this, the ewe should be given a tablespoonful of Sodium Hyposulphide once a day. Both the mother and lamb should be placed on laxative food, such as green oats, bran, or linseed oil meal, until the animals recover their appetite.

DISEASES OF THE EWE.

Abortion.

Abortion in ewes may be due to a variety of causes. It may be the result of the animal being affected with a febrile disease such as Blackleg, Scab or Pneumonia. Again, it may be due to the ingestion of mouldy food, or the result of giving large doses of intestinal antiseptics. It occurs occasionally in some flocks as a specific infection, although this is quite rare as a rule.

Treatment:

When several cases occur at the same time, it is advisable to examine the feed carefully. Most of the cases result from feeding succulent food when the animals are not accustomed to it. If this should be the case, the forage should be changed immediately. The genital organs may be washed out with a 1% solution of Carbolic Acid or Cresol. If the losses should be of an infectious nature, the aborting animals should be isolated and the fetuses and soiled bedding should be

burned. The barns which contained these animals should be carefully disinfected and the floors and passageways should be well limed to prevent the spread of infection.

Dystocia (Difficult Lambing)

Most difficulties in lambing are due to abnormal presentation of the lamb. A knowledge of how normal lambing takes place is helpful in determining the treatment or assistance required.

Treatment:

Previous to lambing there should be an enlargement of the external opening, sufficient for the lamb to be expelled through the effort of the ewe alone. After a few minutes of straining, the water bag should appear and rupture. After additional straining, the front feet appear with the head between, followed by the body with the hind legs extended. If the lamb is being normally presented, it is only in exceptional cases that it is necessary to give assistance. There may be, however, in the case of large lambs and more particularly with young ewes, times when some help is advisable. When it is reasonably assured that the ewe will be unable to expel her lamb by her own efforts, it is time for the attendant to render assistance. This may be done by pulling on the feet in unison with the straining of the ewe. Unless in extreme cases, excessive force is not advisable on account of the danger of causing internal injury to the ewe.

There may be several forms of abnormal presentation, such as the head and one, or both, of the front feet turned back, coming hind end first, the lamb turned on its back, or twin lambs being presented at the same time. The general practice is, if possible, to correct the position of the lamb. This may be done by first washing the hand and arm with disinfectant, and smearing the hand with vaseline and then working it slowly into the vagina. After the position of the lamb has been corrected, delivery will usually take place without additional help. Difficult cases may arise when it is impossible to get the lamb in the normal position, and under such conditions the best one can do is to obtain delivery with as little injury as possible to the ewe. Lacerations may occur; in such cases external lacerations should be treated with a disinfectant salve or ointment. If internal lacerations have occurred, the uterus and vagina should be flushed with a warm solution of one part Creolin and fifty parts of water.

Eversion of Uterus.

This condition is occasionally met with in ewes, usually following a difficult parturition, and where there has been considerable irritation of the parts, after the lamb is born the ewe continues to strain until the uterus is forced out and hangs in a large mass from the vulva.

Treatment:

The displaced uterus should be carefulll washed with a warm 2% solution of Carbolic Acid and then carefully pushed into place. The animal will struggle while this is being done, but it must be carefully restrained until the parts are all back in their normal positions. In replacing the everted uterus, the closed fist should be placed beneath the mass, which should gradually be pushed up into the vagina. Sutures through the skin on each side of the vulva, and passing over the opening, will often prevent a recurrence. These stitches should be removed after the animal ceases straining.

Mammitis.

(Inflammation of the Udder.)

This is an inflammatory disease of the udder and is a common ailment in ewes suckling young. It is especially common in early spring, when the flock has been placed on succulent pasture. As a rule, it occurs only in a mild form, but occasionally it has a gangrenous form, from which there is no recovery.

Symptoms:

In many cases the gland is hard, swollen and tender, often pitting on pressure. There may be loss of appetite, restlessness, and pain when the ewe is suckled. The udder may be dark red or purplish in color. The milk secretion is changed and may be either thick, stringy and streaked with blood, or again it may be only a watery fluid. Unless care is taken, the internal structures of the quarter affected may be destroyed. In cases where the milk secretion is stopped, the flow may or may not return at the next period of lactation.

Treatment:

The affected animal should be removed at once from the flock and the lamb taken from her immediately. The udder should be milked frequently and hot applications applied. A treatment highly recommended and popular with many, is

the dissolving of ½ a pound of Epsom Salts in a quantity of warm water. The ewe is placed upon her back, and absorbent cotton is dipped in the solution, which is applied to the udder. Beneficial results may also be derived from the application of Camphorated Oil or Iodine treatment, massaged thoroughly into the udder.

EXTERNAL PARASITES.

Sheep Scab.

This disease is caused by the parasite Psorpotes Communis Ovis, and is one of the most serious diseases known to sheep. As it is classified as contagious, it is desirable that should it make its appearance in a flock, Government officials be notified at once, in order that the affected animals may be quarantined and the disease checked at the earliest possible moment.

Symptoms:

To one accustomed to sheep, the symptoms of scab are not mistakable. Small inflamed areas occur where the mite irritates the skin. Intense itching and the formation of pustules follow rapidly. The wool becomes taggy and commences to fall out. As the infections proceeds, the itching increase until the animal appears to be never at rest. It loses its flesh rapidly, the wool falls out, especially along the flanks and back, exposing large areas covered with crusts, and with the accompanying rubbing and scratching, there is no mistaking an outbreak of scab when it occurs.

Treatment:

As explained, this disease is handled by Government regulations. The proper procedure is to isolate all infected animals, and report to the proper authorities, when the animals can be treated with the proper solution under careful supervision.

INTERNAL PARASITES.

Grub in the Head.

The cause of this disease is the result of the fly Oestrus Oves depositing larvae in the nostrils of the sheep. It then makes its way up the nose into the sinuses and nasal chambers, where it attaches itself to the mucous membranes. It

remains there until fully developed, when it is dislodged by the violent sneezes and snortings of the sheep.

Symptoms:

The infected animal usually runs around with its nose held close to the ground. Later the infected sheep sneezes violently, rolls its head from side to side and exhibits considerable excitement. The eyes become red and watery and the nasal membranes are inflamed.

Treatment:

There is no treatment satisfactory for this trouble. Prevention is the only logical procedure. The smearing of Pine-tar around the nostrils at regular intervals will prevent the trouble to a large extent. Where the fly is prevalent, it is a good plan to apply the tar once a week during the fly season.

Stomach Worm in Sheep.

This is one of the most serious ailments affecting young sheep. In certain sections of the United States, serious losses among lambs have resulted from the infection of this parasite. In some sections only of Alberta has it made its appearance. The result of the infection of this parasite is more frequently seen in wet seasons, and animals on low marshy pastures are usually affected. But if the locality has become infected, the disease will be found on high pastures as well.

Symptoms:

The disease usually affects young lambs, and about July or August, the infected animal begins to hang behind the others. It loses flesh rapidly and has a dull, dejected appearance. The wool becomes harsh and rough, and the victim staggers when it walks. A swelling usually appears on the lower jaw and the visible mucous membranes become pale and the skin like parchment. Death may take place in from 2 to 3 weeks, to as many months.

Treatment:

There are a great many treatments recommended for this trouble. The one most commonly used is ½ an ounce of Gasolene and Raw Linseed Oil, added to 4 ounces of fresh cow's milk. This may be repeated for 3 evenings, allowing food a few hours after the giving of each dose. Recently, the administration of a 1% solution of Copper Sulphate has been recommended. To make this solution, dissolve ¼ of a pound

of Copper Sulphate in 1 gallon of boiling water. Add cold water to make a total of 3 gallons of the solution. The dose is about 3 ounces for yearlings and older sheep, and ½ as much for lambs 3 months old or older.

MISCELLANEOUS DISEASES.

Foot Rot.

This disease is quite common in some parts of Alberta, and is usually started in wet weather, the result of sheep having to stand in mud, or being pastured on low lying land.

Symptoms:

There is considerable inflammation and soreness around the coronary band, and a well marked lameness. Following this, there may be separation of the hoof and small gangrenous spots appearing between the claws of the foot.

Treatment:

The foot should be cleaned thoroughly and all clay, sand or dirt must be removed. In the case where abscesses are forming, poultices may be applied. The swellings may afterwards be opened to allow the pus to escape. The foot should be treated with an antiseptic solution, such as a 5% solution of Carbolic Acid, or a 2% compound solution of Cresol. Where a large number of sheep are affected, they may be driven through a trough containing several inches of Copper Sulphate solution. One pound of this drug to a gallon of water is usually quite effective. The application of Balsam of Peru is also an excellent remedy for this trouble. It must be remembered that when this disease occurs, the flock should be removed to clean, dry pasturage at once.

Sore Eyes.

Disorders of the eye are not very common in this Province. Inflammations may occur, the result of dust, injuries, and occasionally the pollen of certain flowers. It may appear also in conjunction with diseases, such as Nasal Catarrh and Grub in the Head.

Symptoms:

There is usually a well marked flow of tears and great sensitiveness when the eye is exposed to the light. The discharge is at first watery, but later may become purulent. The mucous membranes of the eye are red and swollen. If the

disease has progressed for some time, the eyeball may become clouded, and in certain instances ulcers will form.

Treatment:

It is necessary to remove all foreign matter from the eye as quickly as possible. The eye should then be washed with a 3% solution of Boracic Acid or a 10 to 20% solution of Argyrol. It is necessary to place the affected animals in a dark place until recovery occurs.

Keratitis.

This form of eye trouble has been brought to our attention in only a few instances. On certain farms it assumes an enzootic form and affects several animals in one flock. The first symptom will probably be a profuse discharge of tears from the eye. The eye-lids become swollen, and as the result of inflammation the eye itself becomes clouded and the animal is temporarily blinded. In bad cases a small red spot may appear near the center of the eye-ball. In some animals both eyes may be affected at the same time. As the result of the inflammation the eye-ball may become clouded or milk-white, and in bad cases it may ulcerate and rupture. In instances such as this, the inner structures of the eye are totally destroyed.

As soon as a case of this trouble is noted it should be isolated from the rest of the flock and placed in a dark shed. A few drops of a solution of Nitrate of Silver, the strength of which should be one to five grains to one ounce of distilled water, should be placed in the eye once a day for several days. The placing in the eye of a 10 to 20% solution of Argyrol is also recommended. In addition, cold applications such as bathing the eye with wads of absorbent cotton saturated with very cold water, will also be beneficial.

Goiter.

This disease is quite prevalent in certain sections of Alberta, but is probably more common in the vicinity of the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Lambs from affected flocks usually show an enlargement of the thyroid gland in the region of the throat. Many are born dead, and some are born weak and die within a few days. The cause is attributed to a deficiency of iodine in the food and water. Unless the breeding ewes get a sufficient amount of this drug, serious results follow.

Symptoms:

Enlargement of the thyroid gland, which is situated on both sides of the larynx, is the most common symptom. Lambs thus affected are usually born dead or very weak. Those that live, are often unthrifty and apparently never reach the normal growth.

Treatment:

On farms where this condition is prevalent, goiter can be prevented by the administration of Potassium Iodide daily, for 3 months before lambing. It has been suggested that the dissolving of 4 ounces of Potassium Iodide in as small a quantity of water as possible, and then sprinkling it over 100 pounds of coarse salt, is the most convenient way of administering the drug. On certain sheep farms, Potassium Iodide has been given by dissolving ½ an ounce in the drinking water daily. This is said to be sufficient for 100 ewes. For those lambs born with enlarged thyroid glands, the application of Tincture of Iodine with a soft brush once a day, has been known to reduce them to normal size.

Gravel.

(Urinary Calculi.)

Rams and wethers suffer from obstruction of the urinary passages with small bodies of material made up of mineral salts that are called calculi. Due to the small calibre of the urethra, serious results follow. This condition is not prevalent in Alberta, but has been brought to our attention as occurring on several premises. As it is frequently due to the extensive feeding of sugar beets or mangels, or where feed rich in lime salts is being fed, it is worthy of some consideration.

Symptoms:

This trouble is extremely difficult to diagnose in the early stages, and probably a careful post-mortem examination is the only sure way of finding out the exact cause. In the way of general symptoms, there will be sudden loss of appetite, colicky pains, well marked restlessness, straining, swelling around the abdomen and distension of the bladder. Death usually takes place quite rapidly.

Treatment:

This as a rule is unsatisfactory. Operations are frequently attempted, but unless done by a skilled surgeon, they only

prolong the agony of the animal. Prevention is the only solution to this trouble, and it is suggested that the mixing of a little Sodium Bicarbonate with the food several times a week will largely prevent the trouble. Under the circumstances, it is advisable to withhold sugar beets or mangels from male sheep.

Maggots.

Sheep are apparently very susceptible to maggot infestation. Maggots are the larvae stage of a fly, which are found in the vicinity of stables and barnyards. The adult fly deposits the larvae on the surface of wounds, where the tissues have been injured or torn in some way. They work their way into the skin causing excessive sores, which may result in the death of the animal.

Symptoms:

There is considerable irritation manifested by the animal rubbing the affected part. This area has a lifeless and spongy appearance, and when it is opened the living parasites are quite easily found in the decomposing tissues. This condition occurs only during the hot summer months.

Treatment:

Cleanliness is the first essential in the treatment of this trouble. The wool should be clipped carefully from the vicinity of the wound and the dead or diseased tissues as well as the parasites should be carefully removed. The area should be washed with a solution of Carbolic Acid, one part to 20 parts of water. Many recommend the application of Kerosene, and some Spirits of Turpentine. The latter should not be used on the raw wound as it will cause too much irritation. A mixture of Ether and Sweet Oil is probably one of the most effective remedies that we have. Solutions of Creolin, Kreso or Izal may be used. The prevention of this trouble should be the first consideration, and in cases of injury the application of Pine-tar or equal parts of Lard and Sulphur will prevent the larvae from gaining entrance into the body.

Wounds.

This is the separation of living tissue, and in sheep, they are usually caused by attacks from dogs or lacerations made by barbed wire. On account of the fleece of the sheep, hemorrhage as a rule is not excessive, the wool quickly matting and causing coagulation of the blood. In the way of

treatment, the parts should be carefully washed with some antiseptic solution and all dirt and foreign substances removed, the edges of the cut drawn together and held in place by either bandages or stitches. Astringent solutions such as Alum or Lead Acetate may be applied. If excessive hemorrhage has not occurred, the parts may be smeared with ordinary Pine-tar.

STOMATITIS.

(Sore Mouth)

Stomatitis is an inflammation of the mouth. There are so many different forms of this trouble that space will not allow us to describe each one separately, but the Catarrhal type, or simple redness of the mouth, is the one most frequently seen. If the case is neglected or improperly treated, the tissues will undergo changes that may develop into a most serious condition.

Inflammation of the mouth may occur after injury, by the sharp parts of plants, or of the bearded grains of barley, or the awns of various grasses. Chemical irritants may likewise cause it, particularly such as are applied externally as medicines. Occasionally sheep may drink solutions containing disinfectants and considerable inflammation will result.

The milk of animals suffering from certain diseases may produce inflammation of the mouth of the young lamb. Poisons contained in certain plants as mustard and hemlock, and occasionally fresh clover and insufficiently dried hay, may cause it. It is also claimed that feed infected with various fungus is particularly prone to cause inflammation.

Symptoms.

The mouth will be hot, red, sensitive, with the result that the animal will chew its food in a careful and deliberate manner. The thirst is increased. On examination the mucous membrane of the mouth may, in addition to being inflammed, show small yellowish gray ulcers, which generally cast off shreds of false membrane. Occasionally these ulcers extend over the lips and nose. The tongue may swell considerably and the saliva will dribble from the mouth. As a result of the difficulty in taking feed, the animal soon loses flesh and there is a well marked unthrifty appearance. In young lambs the disease is often rapid and fatal, but older animals usually recover.

Treatment.

In most cases, a regulation of diet and the removal of the causative factors are all that is required to bring about a speedy recovery. The diseased sheep should be fed on green feed, fine hay and if necessary, bran or gruel. Affected animals should be separated from healthy ones. Allow plenty of fresh water, as it enables the animal to rinse the mouth of accumulations of material. The mouth should be swabbed out twice a day with a potassium chlorate solution of 1% to 3%, or alum ½% to 2%, or a hydrogen peroxide solution of 3%. A fountain syringe may be used to rinse out the mouth or a piece of rubber tubing, attached to a metal syringe, will answer the same purpose. Beneficial results may also be obtained by dissolving 2 tablespoonfuls of boracic acid in each pail of drinking water.

POISONS.

We usually consider that the losses due to poisons fall into any one of the following three classes: Mineral, Vegetable and Animal.

Mineral Poisoning.

It occasionally happens that alkali poisoning causes considerable loss in a flock of sheep. Upon investigation, we generally find that the animals had access to some slough that was badly polluted with this mineral. The animals are always hot and thirsty, and no doubt drank large quantities of the water. The symptoms are colicky pains, enteritis, some frothing at the mouth and nose, followed by bloody diarrhea, collapse and death. The treatment is most unsatisfactory. The administration of large quantities of vinegar, raw eggs, gruel and oily preparations may aid in bringing about recovery.

Sheep Dip Poisoning.

Occasionally animals may become poisoned in this manner by swallowing some of the solution or having it pass into the respiratory organs. In these cases treatment is most unsatisfactory, and as a rule death soon takes place. The administration of stimulants such as Aromatic Spirits of Ammonia, Sweet Spirits of Nitre, or Whiskey may give some relief, but usually the animal dies before these have a chance to produce any effect.

Vegetable Poisoning.

Under this heading comes poisonous plants, such as Death Camas, Loco, Larkspur and Water Hemlock. Space will not permit us to go into this subject to any extent, but the bulletin, "Weeds Poisonous to Live Stock," prepared by the Provincial Government, and obtainable upon application, covers this ground most fully. The treatment for all plant poisonings is to administer large quantities of stimulants such as Sweet Spirits of Nitre, or Whiskey, along with a mixture of Potassium Permanganate and Aluminum Sulphate, in 10 grains of each. Tannic Acid is also a well known antidote for many vegetable poisons.

Under poisons of this class there is one that should receive particular attention. That is silage or ensilage poisoning. Numerous cases have been reported, especially during the past two years, and there is no question but that if the ensilage becomes mouldy, the result is one of the most dangerous poisons for sheep that we have. The symptoms come on rapidly, and include violent colic, intense inflammation of the digestive tract, diarrhea, convulsions and death. Treatment is unsatisfactory, and in spite of the antidotes recommended above, very little can be done. Gruels and warm, sweet milk, containing beaten raw eggs, are soothing and nourishing and are worthy of a trial at least.

Animal Poisons.

Under this heading would come poisons, the result of snake bites and insect stings of various kinds. The former is seen occasionally in Southern Alberta, and is likely to produce a serious local irritation, and occasional constitutional disturbances. The symptoms of snake bite is a swelling, producing intense local inflammation, accompanied by depression, weakness, feeble pulse, difficult breathing, stupor or convulsions. In the way of treatment, the bitten part should be incised and bleeding encouraged. Potassium Permanganate in a 5% solution may be applied into and around the wound. Stimulants, such as Alcohol, coffee and Aromatic Spirits of Ammonia, should be administered, as there is usually a well marked depression.

Bites from insects such as wasps and bees at times set up severe local irritation. To produce serious general effects, the poisons would have to be introduced into the victim in large quantities, as when an animal is stung by a swarm of

bees or wasps. The proper treatment would be to wash the parts with Ammonia solution or Permanganate of Potassium, well diluted, and to give some of the common internal stimulants.

GESTATION TABLE FOR SHEEP

(Based on 146–day period)

The average for 707 gestation periods was between 146 and 147 days.

Day of Month Bred.	MONTH BRED											
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	DATES DUE											
	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.
1	27	27	25	25	24	25	24	25	25	24	27	26
2	28	28	26	26	25	26	25	26	26	25	28	27
3	29	29	27	27	26	27	26	27	27	26	29	28
4	30	30	28	28	27	28	27	28	28	27	30	29
		July										
5	31	1	29	29	28	29	28	29	29	28	31	30
	June									Mar.	Apr.	May
6	1	2	30	30	29	30	29	30	30	1	1	1
7	2	3	31	31	30	31	30	31	31	2	2	2
			Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.			
8	3	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3
9	3	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3
10	5	6	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	5	5
11	6	7	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	6	6	6
12	7	8	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	7	7	7
13	8	9	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	8	8	8
14	9	10	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	9	9	9
*15	10	11	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	10	*10	10
16	11	12	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	11	11	11
17	12	13	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	12	12	12
18	13	14	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	13	13	13
19	14	15	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	14	14	14
20	15	16	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	15	15	15
21	16	17	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	16	16	16
22	17	18	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	17	17	17
23	18	19	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	18	18	18
24	19	20	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	19	19	19
*25	20	21	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	20	*20	20
26	21	22	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	21	21	21
27	22	23	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	22	22	22
28	23	24	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	23	23	23
29	24	....	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	24	24	24
30	25	....	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	25	25	25
31	26	....	24	....	24	....	24	24	....	26	....	26

Example: If a ewe were bred on Nov. 15th the date she will be due to lamb may be found by glancing at the figure 15 on the left hand column, headed "Day of month bred," and then following across to the right on this line until the column headed November is reached. The day and month of lambing will be found in this column. For specific example note the months and figures marked (*). Ewe bred Nov. 15th, due to lamb April 10th.

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